A HISTORY OF SOUTHERN LITERATURE

CARL HOLLIDAY

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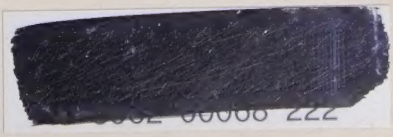

A History of Southern Literature

BY

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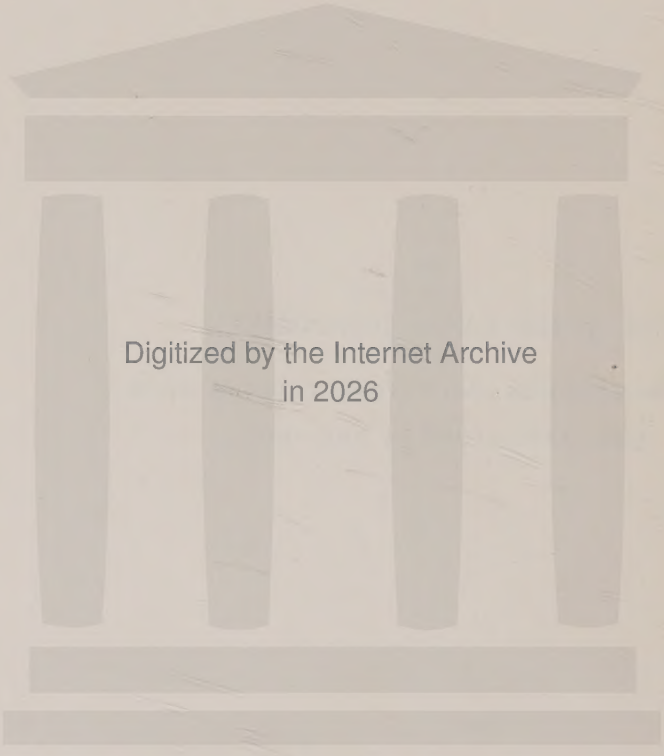

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PREFACE

When, in the development of a nation, the extent of territory inhabited by that people becomes so great as to preclude a mutual understanding of the diverse customs and feelings of the various sections, it is but natural and indeed necessary that such a commonwealth should have more than one distinct type of literature, and that these types should be in many traits exceedingly different. Such, for instance, is fast becoming the condition of letters in the British Empire. The writings of Canada are by no means the same as those of England; neither are those of India or of Australia. The difference between French Literature and Provençal Literature is even more marked. In the study of American Letters it has sometimes been doubted whether that district commonly known as "the South" has produced a literature so different in its fundamental conception and growth as to deserve separate attention. They alone doubt whose knowledge of the subject is limited.

The chief blame for the lamentable fact that until very recently American scholars have failed to recognize a literature of the South must be placed not upon the North, which has been busy extolling its own representative writings, but upon the South itself, which, because of its genial carelessness and procrastination before the Civil War and its poverty and struggles since that conflict, has suffered the critical spirit to lie dormant and its story-tellers and poets to pass almost unnoticed. In the Southern States of this republic men have lived, written, and

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gone into oblivion who in New England would have been encouraged and developed by just yet friendly criticism into geniuses of high rank. Hence, today many unprejudiced and conscientious students of American Letters are ignorant of that body of literature—much of it worthy indeed of permanency—which has arisen in the South.

It is the purpose of this volume to make a study of the various literary movements and their results and to show that the writings of this section are not mere disconnected efforts of isolated thinkers, but, rather, the natural, logical, and continuous productions of a people differing so materially in views and sentiments from their neighbors on the North that even civil war was necessary to prevent their becoming separate nations. Fortunately, each year brings about a clearer understanding between the two vast divisions. But that which is past is history and cannot be undone. Southern Literature has been, and, to a great degree, still is, the result of an attitude differing exceedingly from the attitudes of the Northeast and of the West.

Many Southern scholars are now giving the subject special attention, and there is throughout the entire South a desire to know something of the section's literature. But limited indeed is the information possessed by the best of these investigators.

In only one period may be found plentiful results of study—the period named in this book "The Beginnings." This division of the subject Professor Moses Coit Tyler has treated with such scholarly accuracy and fullness that the author could do little more than repeat his assertions. But this period past, there is indeed poverty of data. It is the author's hope that a more zealous spirit of research may be aroused by this pioneer volume, and that through this means not a few works of real value may again be brought to light.

A HISTORY OF SOUTHERN LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS

(1607-1676)

I

The literature of almost every nation has had its birth in the national traditions, folk-lore, and ancient epics of the barbarous days. Greece created its *Iliad* and its *Odyssey* from the history of its own dim past; Rome founded its *Æneid* on the traditions of old; France took its *Song of Roland* from the legends of antiquity; Germany brought forth its *Nibelungen Lied* from days of pagan worship; and England built the huge fabric of *Beowulf* on tales more ancient than Christianity. All the great literatures of the world have passed through a period of unconscious development, a time when peasant and prince and warrior and minstrel were all unwittingly adding, by their deeds, songs, and stories, rude but rich material to the store of future literary wealth. Such has been the fortunate beginning of most national bodies of letters.

But American Literature had a conscious birth. Its written form was not the result of centuries of slow evolution: it *sprang* into existence. Its origin

does not lie in the crude utterances of a virile but half-savage race; but, rather, in its very beginnings, it was the product of a cultured, enlightened people. In character it was not a pure growth of the native soil, and it had not and never has had, as a whole, the national originality, the unmistakable native note, such as is found in the writings of France or Germany or England. Pure in its grammatical and rhetorical form, pleasing in style, for the most part, without shocks to the æsthetic sense, it lacked most of the faults of a nation's first literary attempts. And yet it had one vast fault: it was imitative. It was but an echo of the great English voice across the waters.

The conditions, however, could not be otherwise. Note the age and the movement. It was a wonderful period in the history of the world. France was entering upon a period of brilliant culture; Germany was casting aside her contented slothfulness; Russia was arising from savagery; and, above all, England, in at least two directions, War and Literature, was becoming mistress of the modern world. Shakespeare walked the streets of London, and men of marvelous genius talked with him daily. Ships came in with strange stories of discoveries in far-away seas. Each day the people realized that their sphere of action was growing. Science, too, had been born again, and experiments, based on facts and not on fantastic theories, were producing astonishing results. Lord Bacon lived and demonstrated a new and practical philosophy. The English had become the greatest nation of the modern world, and proudly they realized it. A new energy, an invigorating self-consciousness, possessed the British, and into every walk of life they entered with an all-conquering confidence.

In such a day American Literature began. The little band of adventurers who met in London during Christmas week, 1606, knew that the eyes of all England were upon them. They were undertaking an unprecedented task: Even the poet-laureate sang of them. The poet Drayton, in his poem, declared that they were going forth to found a new nation and a new literature, and his prophecy was indeed true. Is it to be wondered at, then, that the first writings of the new world were but echoes of the literature of beloved old England? For these new comers were only Englishmen under new conditions. They were men suddenly transported from the wonderful creative activity of England to the absolutely unliterary wilderness of America. Naturally, necessarily, their words were filled with memories of the mother country. And, again, "royal influence of favor and of disfavor swayed largely those new and feeble currents of English life and letters which were astir beyond the Atlantic."

But, in spite of the lack of individuality in the beginnings of American Literature, there is one charming trait in it all, and that is *the element of wonder.* Every line of those early writings seems filled with astonishment. Can the world be so big? Can there be such a vast land unknown before? Can there be such beautiful scenes, such magnificent rivers, mountains, and forests outside of England? These were some of the questions that seemed constantly before the first writers. And the cry on every side was, Tell us more of this strange land. Therefore the first literature of America, and, of the South, was a literature of description and of information.

And another fact in this connection must be noted. The pioneers of American Letters were not primarily men of letters but men of *action,*—adventurers hungering for new scenes and blood-rousing deeds.

We must not, therefore, look for the style that marks the classic. The plain and ready words of men, daring and instantaneous in action—these are what we shall find. The strange story which they told contained charm enough, and the sense of wonder which filled each expression was, and is to this day, ample recompense for any rudeness of word. As has been indicated, it is a descriptive and historical literature, with but little poetry, no drama, no fiction,—at least no *intentional* fiction. Yet it is good: some of it is more than good: portions are excellent. Clearness, vigor, the happy readiness of men who have seen new wonders and who know that they have facts which others are yearning to know—these are the main traits of our earliest literature.

Just here the fact should be noted that in their very conception and birth the literatures of New England and of the South were unlike. The genial air of Virginia and the rigorous climate of New England, the artistic, adventurous, careless, and somewhat dissolute Cavalier of the one and the stern, blunt, restrained, and coldly righteous Puritan of the other, the unceasing struggle of the Northerner and the easy wealth of the Southerner, all could but have their influence. On the one hand may be seen the shrewd philosophy of an Emerson and the stern religious tendency of a Bryant: on the other the passionate eloquence of a Calhoun and the nature-rapture of a Lanier. The literature of the South is not merely geographically Southern; it is Southern in thought, in feeling, and in history.

II

It has been said that the first writing of America was one of information: in quality it may not be of the best, but its quantity is surprisingly large.

Letters and tracts were written by thousands; for king, peasant, priest, warrior and scholar, all were interested in this strange, new land. Statements upon the subject were encouraged by every one; by the nobility that the kingdom might be enlarged; by the clergy that the Church might be extended; by the common people that greater opportunities in life might be offered. Many of those ancient documents are yet preserved, and it is interesting to note how unanimous all are in their glowing accounts of the new region. The unbounded resources astonished every one; "the abundance of fish of every kind, countless flocks of land and water fowls, deers, hares, rabbits, and other hunting without end: with much fruit and eatable roots unknown at home." Grapevines, "as thick as a man's body," and gigantic trees were frequently mentioned. Some writers, in their enthusiasm, essayed poetry, as, for instance, did "R. Rich, gent, one of the voyage," who, in his *Newes from Virginia,* thus praises the resources:

> "Great store of fowls, of venison,
> Of grapes and mulberries,
> Chestnuts, walnuts, and such like,
> Of fruits and strawberries."

All these reports had a marvelous effect in England, and in every tavern, theatre, and book-shop the ravishing descriptions of the vast Virginia domain passed from tongue to tongue. For England was crowded. "The people," said a preacher of the day, "doe swarm in the land as young bees in a hive in June, the mighty overcoming the weak." And the letters from the new territory mentioned, moreover, the crying need, not of knights and courtiers, but of skilled and willing laborers—a kind of advice which, if followed, would have spared the evil days that afterwards came to the little settlement. For the lack of persistent work was the main weakness in the

entire movement. In the list of valuable articles mentioned as exports we find "sassafras, fifty pounds per tonne" and "sarsaparilla, two hundred pounds per tonne," but the number of things resulting from agricultural and industrial enterprise was an exceedingly small one. Laziness and bad management weakened the colony, and the observant Indians, seeing the approaching feebleness, renounced their former liberality and now often "pushed the bottom of the basket up with their hands" in order that less corn might make a bushel.

III

But among this careless band was one man whom boldness, intellect, and common sense made a natural leader, and whom circumstances made the first writer in American Literature. It is a significant hint of the future democracy of American Letters that the earliest author bore that most democratic of all names, John Smith.

John Smith — (1579-1631)

A True Relation of Virginia is a small portion of the title which Captain Smith (1579-1631) gave the first American book; but as the remainder would cover some ten or twelve lines, the reader will be spared. The volume was written during the first thirteen months of the colonial life, and the slow-sailing "Phœnix," leaving Jamestown in June, 1608, probably carried it to London. It was sold first at "the grey-hound in Paul's Church-Yard," on almost the same day as that of Milton's birth and within three blocks of the great poet's birth-place.

Its author was a strange mingling of the audacious warrior and the poetic Cavalier. Born at Willoughby, England, in 1579, he early became imbued

with the venturesome spirit of his times; and his entire life is but a romantic story of dangers, struggles, and hair-breadth escapes. He early enlisted in the war against the Turks, was a prisoner for one year, and later wandered through all the civilized countries. In his twenty-seventh year he joined the Virginia colonizing expedition and came with the first settlers to Jamestown. There, as president of the colony, he led a life of unceasing activity, displaying an astonishing versatility, a firm leadership, and a perseverance truly remarkable. He directed all undertakings, built houses, cleared the forest, traded with the Indians, judged and punished his fellow colonists, explored the neighboring country, drew maps, and in the midst of hunger, sickness, and rebellion, wrote his most excellent and entertaining papers.

After having been with the colonists two years, he returned to England in the fall of 1609, and remained there until 1614 when he made a voyage to New England. He went back with a map of the country about Cape Cod, and in the next year started out with several hundred colonists for this region. But his ships were captured by French pirates and he himself was sent a prisoner to Rochelle. His usual good fortune did not desert him; for he soon escaped to England. It seems that his life was comparatively quiet from this time forth, and that, as old age crept over him and as the bitterness caused by some of his ill-fated schemes passed away, he came to be looked upon as the greatest living authority on explorations and colonization. The life of such varied and strenuous activities ceased in 1631.

"A restless, vain, ambitious, overbearing, blustering fellow who made all men either his bot friends or his bot enemies," he nevertheless belonged to that

sane and wholesome class of men that can both do and express. Like several others of the Elizabethan era, he was a man of action and of letters. He remains to us as a well-rounded man, "not," to use Professor Tyler's expression, "a doer who is dumb, not a speech-maker who cannot do." Among his works are several of historical importance today; such as, *A True Relation of Virginia* (1608), *A Map of Virginia* (1612), *New England's Trials* (1620), and *A Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624). Surely, this is not a bad array for a man who had spent more of his days in the wilderness than in the court, and who was accustomed more to the wild speech of the red man than to the soft words of knights and ladies.

The *True Relation* possesses something of the charm of *Robinson Crusoe*. The adventures with the Indians, the bold yet cautious journeys up the unexplored James, the building of the village, the departure of the ships, the many pleasures and sorrows, all these are quaintly described. It is the old story, retold once more, of primitive life, of a returning once more to Nature and a starting all over. Its picturesque descriptions of pioneer life, aside from their historical value, possess an absorbing interest to a reader of today. And, yet, this was not an intentional literary effort, but, rather, a tract, or letter, of information written for the purpose of encouraging the stock-holders of the Virginia Company. It is the work of a man proud of his efforts and their results, and glowing with the fresh memories of strange adventures. Filled with resolution, cheer, and hardiness, it is a little volume of pure, racy English, highly worthy of being the first book in a national literature.

The ship "Phœnix" carried the manuscript of the *True Relation* to London; three months later another

vessel came from England, bearing colonists, supplies and a letter of complaint from the London stock-holders. The result was the second piece of American Literature. In a bold, vigorous, trenchant tract, John Smith made reply,—a reply in which historians have pointed out the first intimations of national life in America. For Smith fearlessly rebuked the English masters and refused to follow instructions that he felt to be unjust and injurious to the feeble settlement. His words are plain and blunt:

"For the charge of this voyage of two or three thousand pounds we have not received the value of an hundred pounds. . . . From your ship we had not provision in victuals worth twenty pounds; and we are more than two hundred to live upon this,—the one half sick, the other little better. For the sailors, I confess they daily make good cheer; but our diet is a little meal and water, and not sufficient of that. . . . Captain Ratcliffe is now called Sicklemore. . . . I have sent you him home lest the company should cut his throat. . . . When you send again I entreat you rather send but thirty carpenters, husbandmen, gardeners, fishermen, blacksmiths, masons, and diggers-up of trees' roots, well provided, than a thousand of such as we have; for except we be able both to lodge them and feed them, the most will consume with want of necessaries, before they can be made good for anything. . . . These are the causes that have kept us in Virginia from laying such a foundation that ere this might have given much better content and satisfaction: but as yet you must not look for any profitable returns."

Well indeed may it be called "Hotspur rhetoric." It is a first declaration of rights, put forth in terse language and breathing that same spirit which in

another century brought forth the Declaration of Independence and the Revolution.

A work composed at about the same time, but not published until 1612, is *A Map of the Bay and the Rivers, with an Annexed Relation of the Countries and Nations that Inhabit Them.* Again Smith shows his versatility. The article is one of much scientific interest, dealing with the climate, topography, fauna, flora, and natives, and the whole is saved from traditional scientific dryness by the enthusiasm and wit of its high-spirited author. Here is a specimen paragraph:

"Here are mountains, hills, plains, valleys, rivers, and brooks, all running most pleasantly into a fair bay compassed, but for the mouth, with fruitful and delightsome land. In the bay and rivers are many isles, both great and small. . . . The mountains are of divers natures, for at the head of the bay the rocks are of a composition like millstones, some of marble, and so forth. And many pieces like crystal we found, as thrown down by water from these mountains. . . . These waters wash from the rocks such glistening tinctures that the ground in some places seemeth as gilded; where both the rocks and the earth are so splendent to behold that better judgments than ours might have been persuaded they contained more than probabilities. The vesture of the earth in most places doth manifestly prove the nature of the soil to be lusty and very rich."

There is individuality in this form of writing, and imagination and accuracy. It shows the power to observe minutely, to choose with discrimination, and to record with vigor. As a final example of Smith's ability in this direction, let us notice his description of Powhatan:

"He is of personage a tall, well proportioned man, with a sour look, his head somewhat gray, his beard

so thin that it seemeth none at all, his age near sixty; of a very able and hardy body to endure any labor. About his person ordinarily attendeth a guard of forty or fifty of the tallest men his country doth afford. Every night upon the four quarters of his house are four sentinels, each from other a slight shoot, and at every half hour one from the *corps de garde* doth halloo, shaking his lips with his finger between them; unto whom every sentinel doth answer round from his stand. If any fail they presently send forth an officer that beateth him extremely."

Such then were the earliest writings of America, and such was their author. Hasty and boastful as he was, we find in him a man of many noble qualities, an adventurer ready and willing, a hero according to many tests. He was possessed of many of the minor faults prevalent in his century, but among his virtues were some unknown to many a soft-handed courtier with whom he of necessity associated. His influence on the literature of England was greater than is generally supposed; for so frequently were his exploits used in tales and plays that he was led to exclaim, "They have acted my fatal tragedies upon the stage and racked my relations at their pleasure."

Just here may be noted again the difference between the beginnings of Southern Literature and those of New England Literature. The first writings of the Plymouth colony were the ponderous efforts of a zealous but cold-spirited clergy, and naturally their works showed too much of intellect and too little of heart. The first writings of what afterwards became known as "the South," though lacking, perhaps, on the intellectual side, possessed a life and a romantic spirit that make them entertaining to this day. The first American romance

is Captain John Smith's story of Pocahontas; its tenderness would never have appealed to the stern New England divines.

IV

There are many writers deserving of some mention among the pioneers of Southern Literature: but we can take notice of but a very few of even the most prominent. One of the most honorable and perhaps the most highly respected of the early colonists was George Percy (1586-1632), brother of the great Earl of Northumberland.

George Percy — (1586-1632)

By means of his *Discourse of the Plantations of the Southern Colony in Virginia by the English* we are able to realize through what heroic suffering America became habitable for civilized man. This story, which tells the history of the colony from the beginning until September, 1607, is written in plain, strong language and is a graphic picture of the horrors of that first summer, when disease, famine, and Indian treachery destroyed the life of many and the hope of all. "If it had not pleased God," he writes, "to put a terror in the savages' hearts, we had all perished by those wild and cruel pagans, being in that weak estate as we were; our men night and day groaning in every corner of the fort most pitiful to hear. If there were any conscience in men, it would make their hearts to bleed to hear the pitiful murmurings and outcries of our sick men without relief every night and day for the space of six weeks; some departing out of the world, many times three or four in a night, in the morning their bodies trailed out of their cabins like dogs to be buried."

V

William Strachey

From a literary point of view, perhaps the best accounts of these early days were written by the colonist, WILLIAM STRACHEY. Little is known of the man other than the few facts obtainable from his own works. The time and place of his birth are uncertain; but he was evidently a man of considerable native ability and education. When the body of colonists set sail in nine small vessels, on the fifteenth of May, 1609, he was a passenger on "The Sea Venture." It was a fearful journey, eleven months in duration, and the tempest and shipwreck were so filled with terrifying scenes that Strachey remembered each detail vividly. The ships were scattered far and wide, and "The Sea Venture" was cast upon the shores of the Bermudas. The passengers spent the winter of 1609 on the island and afterwards, in two small, clumsy vessels, made from the wreckage of their former vessel, they set sail and reached Jamestown in May, 1610. Within a few weeks Thomas West, third Lord De la Warr, came with fresh supplies and colonists.

The narrow escapes, the strange scenes, the heart-rending misery on every hand, the joy at each arrival, all these greatly affected Strachey, and, as he himself declared, he felt it his duty to record the wonderful events. Therefore, during July, 1610, when he had been in Virginia but three months, he wrote, at Jamestown, *A True Reportory of the Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Kt., upon and from the Islands of the Bermudas; his coming to Virginia; and the estate of that colony then and after under the government of the Lord La Warr.* It is a book of true literary merit, measured by any standard of criticism, and we may well believe that

from it Shakespeare caught the inspiration which produced the weirdly beautiful *Tempest*. The manner of telling the story is rapid, arousing, and always vivid, while, in the description of the mighty storm at sea, it rises to extraordinary effectiveness. " . . . a dreadful storm and hideous began to blow from out the Northeast, which, swelling and roaring as it were by fits, some hours with more violence than others, at length did beat all light from heaven, which, like an hell of darkness, turned black upon us, so much the more fuller of horror, as in such cases horror and fear use to overrun the troubled and overmastered senses of all, while (taken up with amazement) the ears lay so sensible to the terrible cries, and murmurs of the winds and distraction of our Company, as who was most armed and best prepared, was not a little shaken.

"For four and twenty hours the storm, in a restless tumult, had blown so exceedingly, as we could not apprehend in our imaginations any possibility of greater violence, yet did we still find it, not only more terrible, but more constant, fury added to fury, and one storm urging a second, more outrageous than the former, whether it so wrought upon our fears, or indeed met with new forces. Sometimes strikes in our Ship amongst women, and passengers not used to such hurly and discomforts, made us look one upon the other with troubled hearts, and panting bosoms, our clamors drowned in the winds, and the winds in thunder. Prayers might well be in the hearts and lips, but drowned in the outcries of the Officers,—nothing heard that could give comfort, nothing seen that might encourage hope."

Strachey went back to England in 1611, and, although he did not return to Virginia, he always seemed intensely interested in the welfare of the struggling settlement. Perhaps the most ably written

account of the movement is his *Historie of Travaile into Virginia,* produced probably in 1612 but not published until 1845.

VI

Alexander Whitaker — (1585-1613)

The clergyman who baptized Pocahontas and performed her marriage ceremony was ALEXANDER WHITAKER (1585-1613). Of all the figures in early colonial history, with the possible exception of Roger Williams, this man showed the most godlike characteristics, the most sincere spirit of sacrifice, and the most unflagging zeal for the uplifting of his brother men. For, all the comforts that a well-to-do clergyman might enjoy were his in his parish in Northern England, while influential relations, native ability, and learning bid fair to make him a leader in the English Church. His father was the celebrated divine, William Whitaker, master of Saint John's College, Cambridge, and he himself had received his degrees from the same university. Yet, the conviction gradually settled upon him that his was the duty of converting the Indians, and, "to the wonder of his kindred and amazement of them that knew him," he sailed, in 1611, with Sir Thomas Dale's party. For more than three years this good man, "the Apostle of Virginia," labored among the red men, and then, in 1613, met death by drowning.

The work which calls our attention to Whitaker as a writer is his *Good News from Virginia,* published in London in 1613. It was written after the missionary had been in America two years, and consequently whatever it records has an accurate and authoritative character. As the book is the production of a preacher, we should naturally expect it to

smack somewhat of the pulpit, and we are not surprised to find it, as Crashawe declares, a "pithy and godly exhortation interlaced with narratives of many particulars touching the country, climate, and commodities." In fact, Whitaker actually takes a text and, expounding upon it, shows that there is a commanding call for religious men in America. Yet, despite the sermonizing trait, it is a book full of cheer, enthusiasm, and far-seeing hope for the future. Showing, throughout, the carefulness of the man of letters, it is beautiful, moreover, because of its spirit of human kindness. "They acknowledge," he writes of the Indians, "that there is a great God, but know him not . . . wherefore they serve the devil for fear, after a most base manner. . . . If this be their life, what think you shall become of them after death but to be partakers with the devil and his angels in hell for evermore?" Turning toward that beloved England, from which he was a voluntary exile, he exclaims, "Awake, you true-hearted Englishmen . . . remember that the plantation is God's and the reward your country's."

Earnest and ever zealous in spirit, his work has, at the same time, the simplicity and the refinement of the Cambridge scholar that he was. His productions are, from a literary standpoint, more than good, and in any other period than the Elizabethan era might have brought him into note as a prose writer. He stands as does John Smith, both a doer and an expresser, the man of action and the man of letters, ever wholesome, ever satisfied with today and its labors.

VII

In April, 1619, there came over with Governor George Yeardley, a man of surprising brilliancy and

John Pory — (1570–1635(?)

ability, yet one whose life had not fulfilled the brilliant prophecies of his earlier days. For now, in his fiftieth year, his friends gently hinted that he too zealously "followed the custom of strong potations"; for his many winning qualities had made life a trifle too easy for his own good. His name was JOHN PORY. With a Bachelor's and a Master's degree from Cambridge, he had continued, after his college days, a special study of geography and commerce, and had gained very favorable notice along this line through his translation of an Italian work, *A Geographical Historie of Africa.* In 1605, when he was thirty-five years of age, he was a member of Parliament, and at that time he counted his influential friends by the hundreds.

But the convivial spirit was gradually growing upon him, and those interested in him, considering it best to get him away from England, procured for him the position as secretary of the Virginia colony. Here, as in England, the same traits of strength and of weakness showed themselves. He at once became a general favorite, was made a member of the colonial council, and was chosen speaker of the general assembly. But continuous work was becoming more and more distasteful, while he "followed the custom of strong potations" to an extreme alarming even in that Golden Age of the ale-house. At length, in 1621, he gave up all his offices and during the next year sailed for England. The following year found him again in Virginia, as a commissioner to investigate colonial affairs; but in 1624 he returned to London and there spent his remaining days. The life of comparatively meagre fulfillment ended in September, 1635.

Although Pory found it indeed difficult to follow the straight and narrow path, there was one thing that he could do with a most happy facility: he could

write. Brilliant and witty to a remarkable degree, his accounts of his American experiences are exceedingly entertaining specimens of spicy, racy English. One of his best pieces is his letter to the English statesman, Sir Dudley Carleton: for in this is such a mixture of heterogeneous facts, satire, history, and scientific notes as rarely occurs in one paper. The raw settlers seem to afford him much amusement, and they are frequently the object of his wit. He writes of them thus:

"Nowe that your lordship may know that we are not the veriest beggars in the worlde, our cowekeeper here of James Citty on Sundays goes accowtered all in freshe flaming silke; and a wife of one that in England had professed the black arte, not of a scholler, but of a collier of Crogdon, weares her rough biver hatt with a faire perle hattband and a silken suite thereto correspondent. But to leave the Populace and to come higher:—the Governor here, who at his first coming besides a great deale of worth in his person, brought only his sword with him, was at his late being in London, together with his lady, out of his meer greetings here able to disburse very near three thousand pounds to furnishe himselfe for his voyage. And once within seven years I am persuaded (*absit invidia verbo*) that the Governor's place here may be as profitable as the Lord Deputies of Ireland."

VIII

George Sandys — (1578-1644)

Thus far all the literature of the New World had been written mainly for geographical and other scientific purposes. But now, for the first time on the American continent, a work written for Literature's own sake was produced. George Sandys (1578-1644), a polished gentleman who walked the straggling streets of Jamestown, decorated with a fashionable lace collar

and a most carefully waxed mustache, had finished, before the twentieth year of the colony's existence, a translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* so artistic and so highly excellent as to run quickly into the eighth edition and to receive hearty praise from such men as Dryden and Pope.

Sandys was a man of note years before coming to America. As the son of Edward Sandys, archbishop of York, he had many relatives of standing and influence. Indeed, one of his brothers was so feared by James I that the royal sovereign, when objecting to the man's appointment, is said to have declared, "Choose the devil if you will, but not Sir Edwin Sandys." The boy matriculated at Saint Mary Hall, Oxford, in 1589, but took no degree. From 1610 to 1615 he traveled extensively and in the latter year published a scholarly and thoroughly interesting account of his journey. It was during this period that he visited the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem and wrote *A Hymn to My Redeemer.* When, therefore, he received the appointment as treasurer of the Virginia Company, in 1621, he was widely known as a traveler, as a scholar, as a prose writer, and especially as a poet. For before his departure for America the first five books of his translation of Ovid had met with a most encouraging reception and had quickly gone into a second edition. Many friends feared that a residence in the wilderness of America would stifle the poetic fire, and the poet, Michael Drayton, for one, felt it his duty to exhort the bard.

> "Go on with Ovid, as you have begun
> With the first five books; let your numbers run
> Glib as the former; so shall it live long
> And do much honor to the English tongue,
> Entice the Muses thither to repair;
> Entreat them gently; train them to that air:
> For they from hence may thither hap to fly."

Such an exhortation, it would seem, was indeed necessary; for, upon his appointment as a member of the council, in 1624, additional duties were placed upon the poet, while the management of a plantation which he had acquired and the frequent quarrels which he had with the council, the officials, and his neighbors in general, must have consumed most of the hours of day. But, as he himself declares, he stole the hours of night, and, to the surprise and delight of all, he published, in 1626, the remaining ten books of the *Metamorphoses*. The work proved to be a very artistic piece of literature and, as mentioned above, sold very rapidly. The poet's nature, however, was evidently not so congenial as his poetry, and he gradually lost his influence and finally left Virginia in 1631. In England he led a quiet country life at Bexeley Abbey in Kent, where he, "after his travaile over the world, retired himself for his poetry and contemplation." There he died in the spring of 1644.

Viewed from any standpoint, his translation of Ovid is a remarkable one. And, indeed, when we consider the circumstances attending the production of the later books, the perseverance of the translator seems little short of marvelous. Within a few months after his arrival in Virginia the Indian massacre of March, 1622, occurred, and the peaceful community of Jamestown changed suddenly to a blood-thirsty band of Indian hunters; and there, amidst such surroundings, and with the additional cares of his office upon him, he wrote a poem, having, as he declares, in the dedication, "wars and tumults to bring it to light instead of the Muses." Dr. Moses Coit Tyler has well spoken of it as "the first utterance of the conscious literary spirit articulated in America." Compressed into the same number of lines as the original, it yet has a freedom that is as

pleasing as the literalness of the thought. Every line bears evidence of scholarship and extreme refinement, while a surprising dexterity in poetics gives the whole a polish too frequently lacking in translations. Not only the beauty but the passion of the original is faithfully retained. For instance, what could be more filled with the fire of inhuman wrath and revenge than portions of the sixth book? Procne, avenging the unfaithfulness of her husband, King Tereus, slays and prepares for the monarch's table their own beloved son. The king, after he had eaten heartily of the fearful banquet, called for his little boy, Itys.

"Procne could not disguise her cruel joy,
In full fruition of her horrid ire,
Thou hast, said she, within thee thy desire,
He looks about, asks where; and while again
He asks and calls, all bloody with the slain,
Forth like a Fury, Philonela flew
And at his face the head of Itys threw;
Nor ever more than now desired a tongue
To express the joy of her revenged wrong,
He with loud outcries doth the board repel,
And calls the Furies from the depths of hell;
Now tears his breast, and strives from thence in vain
To pull the abhorred food; now weeps amain
And calls himself his son's unhappy tomb;
Then draws his sword and through the guilty room
Pursues the sisters, who appear with wings
To cut the air; and so they did. One sings
In woods; the other near the house remains
And on her breast yet bears her murder's stains,
He, swift with grief and fury, in that space
His person changed. Long tufts of feathers grace
His shining crown; his sword a bill became;
His face all armed; whom we a lapwing name."

It is a literary work in which America may feel genuine and perhaps justifiable pride. For to no small extent it is America's, written amidst the giant trees of her virgin forest and beside the broad waters of her unconstrained rivers; and perhaps among such

surroundings it acquired a dignity that it might not have possessed, if written amidst the silken rustle of the royal court.

IX

Details might be given about many other writers of those earlier days; such as R. Rich, who came to Virginia in 1609 and wrote his poetic *Newes from Virginia* in 1610; and John Rolfe, who so simply and yet so eloquently told why he chose his dusky bride, Pocahontas. But the mere giving of a list of writers does not explain the growth of a literature. Let us, therefore, briefly notice three characters that, because of their literary excellence and literary influence, stand out from among the many.

Henry Norwood

Col. Henry Norwood, a relative of Governor William Berkeley, was a traveler with the genius of a true story-teller; and, consequently, when he made his adventurous trip to the New World in 1641, he gave a thrilling account of it all under the title *A Voyage to Virginia.* It has something of the *Robinson Crusoe* character about it; a multitude of convincing details, accurate descriptions, exact geographical and quasi-scientific comments, all lending much the same absorbing interest and air of reality as Defoe's famous story. There is something of the old charm of a sea-tale in it; for sailors' talk and storms and first views of long-wished-for land claim our interest. It is the plain, straightforward story of a man who has seen strange lands and stranger adventures, who has suffered famine and faced death, and who now tells a tale that needs no ornamentation to enhance its dramatic interest. It is a narrative that doubtless would prove popular to the average reader of this day.

X

John Hammond

During these years a new colony had sprung up; a part of Virginia north of the Potomac had become known as Maryland. It, too, contributed its tithe to the first literature of America. Father Andrew White wrote an elegant Latin account of the voyage made by the first settlers of the new colony, and various topics of the same character were discussed by petty literary aspirants. Above all others, however, stands one blunt fellow, whom we may justly call the first man to express in literature a true love and an uncompromising admiration for America. John Hammond was his name. He came to the new land in 1635. After nineteen years' residence in the Virginia colony he removed to Maryland, and at length, in 1656, went on a visit to England. He at once began to long for his American home, and declared that "by God's assistance" he did not intend to be out of it again. "It is that country in which I desire to spend the remnant of my days, in which I covet to make my grave."

Here, then, is the first sign of that American patriotism which becomes so vigorous within the next half-century. Hammond looked at England, not with the blind pride of a native, but with the observant, critical eyes of a foreigner. *He was on the defensive.* He felt it his duty, after a residence of "upward of one and twenty years," to write a book, denying the lies that had "blinded and kept off many from going thither whose miseries and misfortunes by staying in England are much to be lamented and much to be pitied." The name of his book (1656) is *Leah and Rachel.* An elegant account it is not; for, as the author himself admits, its phrases are often "harsh and disordered." But he had the Ben Franklin cast of mind, strong, frank, and manly; and

the truth told by him in rugged plainness becomes convincing. Commenting upon the hypocritical preachers who came to Virginia, he declares that "very few of good conversation would adventure thither . . . yet many came, such as wore black coats and could babble in a pulpit, roar in a tavern, exact from their parishioners, and rather by their dissoluteness destroy than feed their flocks."

In all comparisons he is the true American; his is the best land on the globe. He pities the "base, slavish, penurious life" of the English laborer. Many, he thinks, "itch out their wearisome lives in reliance of other men's charities, an uncertain and unmanly expectation." Again, he writes: "I have seriously considered when I have (passing the streets) heard the several cries and noting the commodities and the worth of them they have carried and cried up and down, how possibly a livelihood could be exacted out of them, as to cry 'matches,' 'small coal,' 'blacking,' 'pen and ink,' 'thread,' 'laces,' and a hundred more such kind of trifling merchandises." It is the observing, shrewd, practical American who writes this,—the first specimen of his tribe. He is impatient at the sight of oppression; no excuse is accepted for loss of time and of energy; reverence for customs does not blind his eyes to resulting miseries. His work has the strong, masculine healthiness of an intellect that has felt the freshness, the unrestraint of a vast, new country.

XI

George Alsop

Hammond's book was published in 1656; in 1666 there appeared a little volume, entitled *A Character of the Province of Maryland*. Its author, George Alsop, was a young emigrant, who in 1658, being then in his twentieth year, sold his labor for four years in advance in order that he might secure

passage to America. He was a thorough despiser of Cromwell, and, as this had been the partial cause of his leaving England, he at once returned upon the accession of King Charles. But the few years that he remained in Maryland served to make material for the drollest papers of the early Colonial period. Imbued with the spirit of mirth, it is indeed a "dish of discourse." It is a mixture of prose and so-called poetry, a jumble of interesting facts, ridiculous descriptions, and indelicate and often vulgar assertions. In Alsop we have the loud-laughing country wit who is also able to write. He spares no one, not even himself. Yet mingled with his humor is some genuine enthusiasm for the productiveness of America.

"Here, if the devil had such a vagary in his head as he had once among the Gadarines, he might drown a thousand head of hogs and they'd ne'er be missed; for the very woods of this province swarm with them." And, again, he declares that "herds of deer are as numerous in the province of Maryland as cuckolds can be in London, only their horns are not so well dressed and tipped with silver." The same years that Alsop was writing his drolleries, the psalm-singing settlers far north of him were calmly reading a cheerful little volume dealing with eternal damnation and other pleasant features of the hereafter, and entitled *The Day of Doom.* What a contrast!

XII

Close of the First Period

Here we may close the record of the first period in Southern Literature. It is still a literature of transported Englishmen; but in the next period it ceases to be such. Pride in America as a *home-land* is slowly gaining expression; it is a period of enthusiastic descriptions; in its predominance of the

material and nature-loving over the religious and æsthetic, it at once asserts one of the main differences between the literatures of the two sections.

Meanwhile the New England settlement had begun and was prospering. Stern Religion was its monarch. The theological tone pervaded all thought, all literature; in the South it never had a start. In 1639 a printing press had been placed in the President House at Harvard, and by 1640 that monstrosity of verse, *The Bay Psalm Book,* had been printed. Then followed a stream of really learned theology, with, now and then, an almanac or semi-scientific work for variety, until at length, in 1662, a book of verse, *The Day of Doom,* mentioned above, changed the current. The less austere type of character found along the Southern coast began and continued to run a different course. But all this becomes more evident in the period that follows.

CHAPTER II

NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

(1676-1740)

I

John Milton and American Literature were born on almost the same dates. The year of his death (1674) is nearly that of the end of what may be considered the first period in the Southern branch of that literature. But Milton's poetry did not influence greatly the writings of the South either in those first years or in the period now to be examined. He was too much a Puritan for these people, was too severe, possessed too much moral earnestness. The planter's life, with its easy contentment, hospitality, and rough luxury, was not of the same spirit.

Yet, from another source, there at length came into the literature of the Virginia colonies the very earnestness, the very thoughtfulness, the very moral purpose that had made Milton distasteful to them in his own day. That source was Bacon's Rebellion (1676). From that time forth a notable change came over all American writings. Of course, other causes besides this small but valiant uprising helped to bring in the new era. America was now becoming a true home-land. There now lived many men and women who had been born in Virginia, who had seen no other land, and who possessed, therefore, a genuine love for these hills and valleys. Also,

in the earlier days every one who received any education whatever had gone back to old England for it; but now Harvard and Yale were at hand, while in the colony itself, as early as 1693, William and Mary College had been opened. Under the management of its founder, James Blair, who was its president for fifty years, it rapidly advanced in both scholastic and financial ability, and by 1776 was the richest educational institution in America. Again, the fertility of the soil and the vast amount of unclaimed land had made a comfortable living easy to obtain, while the freedom from the restraints of European life was something to be appreciated. These circumstances and many others had changed the people from a band of temporary colonists, ever looking to an ultimate return to England, to a firmly united community, or social body, contented with their home and looking forward only to a greater expansion of their own local activities.

The first three quarters of the century, then, had been a period of transporting English civilization and culture to America; the last quarter saw the creation of a national consciousness. In this period Southern colonists began to write for Southern colonists, and not for foreign readers. Originality began to assert itself. Local history, local conditions, and, above all, local politics received written discussion. Less was written now, it is true; for, in the lack of literary environment, production languished; but what was written was more truly American. It was far less geographical and descriptive than the literature of the previous era: and the reason is obvious. The men that composed the greater portion of the body of readers were men of the new land, acquainted with all the details of American life and its environments, and they cared noth-

ing for such matters. The condition of the government and its movements were the new topics of interest.

That the printing was not always done in America is not surprising; for in those early days it was that Governor Berkeley covered his soul with infamy by the words "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years." From 1729 until near the Revolution there was but one printing press in Virginia, and that one under official control, while the first newspaper, *The Virginia Gazette,* was not published until 1736. But despite these restraints, inklings of statesmanship began to be perceived, and for the first time the literature of the South, and of America, for that matter, began to sound the sturdy note of "We, the People."

Perhaps it would be well to review briefly the causes and events of Bacon's Rebellion. When, in 1660, Charles II came to the throne, he treated his loyal colony, Virginia, in a most ungrateful manner. His first parliament passed navigation acts that almost paralyzed her agriculture and industries; he himself gave to his favorites immense tracts of land that were not his to give; he placed over the colonists despotic and grasping officials. Providence evidently did not consider the burden distressing enough, and now a far greater calamity came upon the people. There were yet in the colony old men who could tell sickening stories of the great Indian massacres of 1622 and of 1639. Realities now took the place of descriptions. In the spring of 1676 the savages suddenly came down upon the outer settlements, and blood and carnage destroyed all peace. Day by day the suffering increased, yet, strange to say, William Berkeley sat calmly in the governor's mansion and pursued his usual social pleasures. The people were

astonished. Surely he did not understand the situation! But for all their entreaties he gave but promises, and promises could not subdue the red man.

The settlers begged to be organized into an army and to be led against the foe; but the indolence and, above all, the avarice of the governor prevented the movement. Day by day the danger became more threatening. At length the people decided to act. They unanimously called upon a young man, Nathaniel Bacon, to be their leader. Bacon, at this time barely thirty years of age, was a lawyer, trained in London for his profession, an orator, and, altogether, a man of unusual endowment. Accepting the leadership, he quickly organized the colonists, inflicted a lasting punishment upon the savages, and was at once proclaimed a rebel. William Berkeley offered a reward for his capture, and many of his followers were arrested. Then followed a number of conflicts between the two men, in all of which, however, Bacon came out victor. But before the end of the year Bacon died, and twenty-five of his followers were executed. Then it was that King Charles made the sneering remark: "The old fool! In that naked country he has executed more people than I have in all England for the murder of my father."

It was a movement that sank deep into the hearts of the people. Here was the first national hero; here the first general realization that the inhabitants of the New World were a separate people, not only geographically, but politically. In the character of Southern Literature a notable change began to take place, and at length there entered into the writings a defensive spirit of argument and combativeness. In style, however, this literature reflected the displeasing affectations of the English works of the period. The simplicity and the picturesqueness of

such writers as Smith and Whitaker were lacking, and now conceits often spun out their toilsome coil to a wearisome length. But despite the gaudy fleshly covering, the soul was one of earnestness.

II

The Burwell Papers — (1676)

The first concrete literary result of Bacon's Rebellion was *The Burwell Papers* (1676), so named because of the family in whose possession the manuscript so long remained. They form practically a history of the uprising. Opening in the midst of a description of an Indian fight (for the first pages are lost), the story tells of the first savage atrocities, the plea to Bacon to lead the people, the war and his brave career in it, his sad and mysterious death, the deceitful endeavors of his worthless successor, Ingram, and, through it all, the admiration and love for the heroic leader.

It is the old tale of jealousy and corruption in high places. "They began," says the narrative, "to have Bacon's merits in mistrust as a luminary that threatened an eclipse to their rising glories; for though he was but a young man, yet they found that he was master and owner of those induements which constitute a complete man." He returned to his home, branded as a rebel; but, having been acquitted, he was restored to his place as a member of the council and was offered a commission as general. "Thus in the morning before his trial, he was in his enemies' hope and his friends' fear, judged for to receive the guerdon due to a rebel, . . . and ere night crowned, the darling of the people's hopes and desires, as the only man fit in Virginia to put a stop unto the bloody resolutions of the heathen." And, yet, "within two or three days the

people's hopes and his desires were both frustrated by the governor's refusing to sign the promised commission." Then it was that Bacon, with five hundred colonists, hastened to the capital, demanded his commission, *and got it.* Again he was proclaimed a rebel. "It vexed him to the heart . . . for to think that while he was a-hunting wolves, tigers, and foxes, which daily destroyed our harmless sheep and lambs, he and those with him should be pursued in the rear with a full cry, as a mere savage or no less ravenous beast."

But Bacon was not to be outwitted in either combat or intrigue. Therefore, returning to Jamestown and encamping near its borders, he searched the country in all directions and secured the wife of nearly every country gentleman then in the city. He placed the colonial dames in front of his army and dared the enemy to come forth. "Before they could come to pierce their enemies' sides, they must be obliged to dart their weapons through their wives' breasts." Not a shot was fired, and Bacon gained the day. But anxiety, exposure, and, perhaps, poison soon brought death to the valiant leader, and his body was secretly laid to rest by his discouraged followers.

All this is a matter of history, and *The Burwell Papers* are largely of historical importance. But there is one portion of the manuscript of undoubted literary merit. It is a poem "drawn by the man that waited upon his person, as it is said, and who attended his corpse to their burial place." Perhaps this is true, but it is likely that a man holding a higher place than nurse, wrote the dirge. It has a pleading eloquence and a genuine tone of sorrow.

"Death, why so cruel? What! no other way
To manifest thy spleen, but thus to slay
Our hopes of safety, liberty, our all,
Which, through thy tyranny, with him must fall
To its late chaos? . . . . . .

. . . Now we must complain,
Since thou in him hast more than thousands slain,
Whose lives and safeties did so much depend
On him their life, with him their lives must end.
. . . . . .
Who now must heal those wounds or stop that blood
The heathen made, and drew into a flood?
Who is't must plead our cause? Nor trump, nor drum,
Nor deputations; these, alas, are dumb,
And cannot speak."

That the author of the little volume will never be known seems certain; but that in this elegy to Bacon we have the first *original* poem of literary merit cannot be doubted. As true poetry it was scarcely excelled by any written in England during the next decade, and in America not equaled within the following hundred years. Thus the first popular uprising in the name of liberty in America was dignified with verse worthy of the cause.

III

Reason for Literary Barrenness

It is a great pity that a period so auspiciously begun did not bear rich literary results. This was, however, an era of literary barrenness. New England's productions were poor and narrow enough; but the writings of that handicapped section were gradually approaching the form and spirit of pure literature. The reason for all this is not hard to find. It lies in the difference between the units of society in the two colonies. In the North, the people, through necessity, chose the close, densely populated community, the township, the village, and the city; but in the South the county became the measure of government, and frequently the one center of interest in a vast area was the county court-house. Many, many circumstances arising from the

first form of settlement made the Northern environment more stimulating for moral, literary, and, in fact, all forms of intellectual progress. For the social benefits accruing from concentrated organization of industrial efforts, capital, church, and education are not to be gainsaid.

The manor system of the South discouraged manufactures, prevented united municipal endeavors, and created a spirit of reluctance toward accepting new movements. Rank was based largely on possession of land. Extensive, but not intensive, agriculture wrought havoc to both soil and perseverance, and sowed the seed of a characteristic Southern form of poverty known as "land-poor." Such training destroyed here the very kind of shrewdness and far-seeing business ability which the New Englander was so rapidly gaining.

Now, as a result of this system, there undoubtedly existed an admirable degree of domestic felicity, but, at the same time, too much individual independence and a consequent lack of co-operation in culture movements. The New England system was far more likely to cause greater consideration for the opinions of others, while that of Virginia just as certainly presented the danger of nourishing an intolerance born of ignorant egotism. In short, the social structure, a sort of modernized feudal system, with the destructive institution of slavery attached, became a blighting force in a district which, by its natural endowments, should at once have become the most industrious, the most populous, and the richest portion of North America.

Detrimental as were these conditions to industrial progress, they were almost death-dealing in their action upon Southern Literature. Politics became the one positive intellectual force. The utter lack of common schools caused such wide-spread ignorance

that, according to the Virginia historian, Campbell, the first and second generations were far inferior in knowledge to their ancestors. The very gentry of the land were deficient in the rudiments of education. Governor Spotswood, when dissolving the Virginia assembly in 1715, sneeringly said, "I observe that the grand ruling party in your house has not furnished chairmen of two of your standing committees who can spell English or write common-sense, as the grievances under their own handwriting will manifest." Nor was this all. Religious intolerance came forward with its benumbing influence. The burning of witches was not uncommon. In 1632 a law was passed by the assembly of Virginia, punishing all dissenters from the Episcopal Church, while in 1662 the penalty of banishment was placed upon all persons refusing to have their children baptized. All creeds other than that of the Church of England were prohibited, and the Quakers especially received bitter persecution. In 1741 laws persecuting the Presbyterians were enacted, and at an even later date (1746), the colony inflicted cruel punishment upon Moravians and Methodists.

Need the question be asked, Why was the period a barren one in literature? The wonder is that anything worthy of preservation was saved. The words of Professor Tyler, in his *History of American Literature,* may be a little extreme but not greatly so: "The units of the community isolated; little chance for mind to kindle mind; no schools; no literary institutions, high or low; no public libraries; no printing press; no intellectual freedom; no religious freedom; the forces of society tending to create two great classes: a class of vast landowners, haughty, hospitable, indolent, passionate, given to field-sports and politics, and a class of impoverished

white plebeians and black serfs;—these constitute a situation out of which may be evolved country-gentlemen loud-lunged and jolly fox-hunters, militia heroes, men of boundless domestic heartiness and social grace, astute and imperious politicians, fiery orators, and, by and by, here and there, some men of elegant culture, most acquired abroad; here and there, perhaps, after a while, a few amateur literary men; but no literary class, and almost no literature."

IV

However true all this may be, it is a source of satisfaction to note that the period was not so barren as circumstances warranted. It has been said that the era was a time of national consciousness. The literary production which we shall now consider is, in its very nature, strong evidence of such a condition. The book is *The History and Present State of Virginia,* written by Robert Beverley, and published in London in 1705. Beverley was of an ancient Yorkshire family, and his father, who had come to Virginia about 1663, was a man of great importance in colonial affairs. Robert was born in Virginia in 1675, received a good education in England, and succeeded his father as clerk of the Council of Virginia in 1697. Year after year he had complete charge of all public records of the colony, and he at length gained a more intimate knowledge of the actual past and present conditions in Virginia than any other man then living. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that when he saw the proof-sheets of Oldmixon's *British Empire in America,* he turned away in disgust, and, as an antidote, wrote his own accurate and, to this day, entertaining book.

The History and Present State of Virginia — (1705).

The work received wide attention in England and America, and within two years was translated into the French. And the account is thoroughly worthy of honor; for in its swift, direct, and frank style, its evidence of love for man and Nature, and its freedom from dull parts, it may well serve as a model to the historian who would be both accurate and popular. Beverley had a quaint personality and a deal of sound sense, mingled with an artistic perception of form and beauty. He describes with vividness the horse-racing, cock-fighting, and other diversions of the country-life of those old days, and, along with such descriptions, most vigorously defends slavery and praises Virginia women. He never minces his words. After complaining bitterly of the shiftless ways of the easily contented settlers, he vents his disgust in the following words:

"Indeed some few Hides with much adoe are tann'd and made into Servant's Shoes; but at so careless a rate that the Planters don't care to buy them, if they can get others. . . . Nay, they are such abominable Ill-husbands that tho' their Country be over-run with Wood, yet they have all their Wooden Ware from England; their Cabinets, Chairs, Tables, . . . to the Eternal Reproach of their Laziness. . . . They spunge upon the Blessings of a warm Sun and a fruitful Soil, and almost grutch the Pains of gathering in the Bounties of the Earth."

Something of a Southern Ben Franklin, is he not? But, outside of the worth of its contents and its expression, it has a claim for distinction on still another and perhaps more important ground. It shows that at length the people of the South and of America are beginning to consider themselves a *people;* they have come to realize the fact that they

have a past, and that this past is worthy of being recorded. This is indeed a distinct advance in national consciousness.

V

Another production worthy of our notice is decidedly characteristic of American Literature; it is a bit of humor. In the year 1708 there appeared in London a little book entitled *The Sot-Weed Factor; or A Voyage to Maryland—a satire in which is described the laws, government, courts and constitutions of the country, and also the buildings, feasts, frolics, entertainments, and drunken humors of the inhabitants in that part of America.* The author declared himself to be Ebenezer Cook, Gentleman; but who he really was, or where he lived, we cannot discover. So far, absolutely nothing is known about him. Whoever he was, he went about the work of ridiculing Maryland "with malice aforethought."

The Sot-Weed Factor — (1708)

To begin with, he is not pleased with the voyage.

> "Freighted with fools, from Plymouth sound,
> To Maryland our ship was bound."

When he has landed, he opens a store; the tobacco agents, or, as he calls them, the "sot-weed factors," come to him; and his miseries begin.

> "With neither stocking, hat, nor shoe,
> These sot-weed planters crowd the shore,
> In hue as tawny as a Moor,
> Figures so strange, no god designed
> To be a part of human kind;
> But wanton nature, void of rest,
> Moulded the brittle clay in jest."

By some phenomenal course of reasoning the author comes to the conclusion that he has reached the Land of Nod. However, after his first night's battle with mosquitoes and other "domestic" insects that roam of nights, he evidently changes his mind; for he gladly hastens into another part of the country. It is there that he sees his first Indian, a delightful sight.

"His manly shoulders, such as please
Widows and wives, were bathed in grease
Of cat and bear."

At length he goes to court, and in his description of this scene, there is some real humor.

"We sat like others on the ground,
Carousing punch in open air,
Till crier did the court declare.

. . . . . .

And straight the lawyers broke the peace,
Wrangling for plaintiff and defendant.
I thought they ne'er would make an end on't,
With nonsense, stuff, and false quotations,
With brazen lies and allegations.
And in the splitting of the cause,
They used such motions with their paws,
As showed their zeal was strongly bent
In blows to end the argument."

He also meets a Quaker, and forthwith the follower of Penn receives a jab.

"I met a Quaker, yea and nay;
A pious consecrated rogue;
Who neither swore nor kept his word,
But cheated in the fear of God;
And when his debts he would not pay,
By Light Within he ran away."

Ebenezer Cook, Gentleman, meets numerous other scoundrels in Maryland, and we are not surprised when he declares that he is glad to escape with his skin. Taken as a whole, the work is superior in wit

and humor to anything hitherto written in either New England or the South. In 1730 the same author published *Sot-Weed Redivivus; or the Planter's Looking-Glass, in burlesque verse, calculated to the meridian of Maryland;* but this second attempt reminds one of Artemus Ward's sage remark that "an occasional joke improves a comic paper."

VI

Lawson's History of Carolina — (1714)

We have seen that in the first period the greater portion of the literature was descriptive and geographical. The custom of writing about such subjects did not die out in this second period. In 1714 (some authorities say in 1709) there was published in London a sprightly piece of writing, entitled *The History of Carolina,* which is really not a history at all, but rather a collection of descriptions, adventures, and geographical data. And yet it must not be considered as a dry, scientific work; it is far otherwise. Its author, JOHN LAWSON, a Scotchman of considerable talent and wide knowledge, came to Charlestown, S. C., in September, 1700, and after remaining in that State about four months, went to North Carolina. Here his attainments gained immediate recognition, and he was soon appointed Surveyor-General. During the twelve years that he held this position he traveled thousands of miles, lived amidst forests and streams, knew the Indian and the wild animals, and became an enthusiastic and accurate observer. And, luckily, he was as handy with his pen as with his surveying instruments. As a result, this Scotchman, who, by the merest accident, had come to America, developed into one of the most interesting and reliable descriptive writers of the

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colonial days, and his work is considered to our own times as a valuable source of information on pioneer life, Indian customs, climate, wild animals, wild flowers, and a hundred and one other subjects of interest to lovers of Nature and of primitive life. The author wrote nothing more. In 1712 the Indians became intensely enraged with him because he surveyed their land, and, according to the colonial writer, William Byrd, he was waylaid and killed by them.

Lawson's writings are somewhat in the form of a diary, with not a little of the flavor possessed by a modern magazine article that discusses some far away and lately developed country. The volume has many vivid descriptions; for, by his simple, unaffected way of telling facts, the curious scenes often stand before the reader with most satisfying plainness. Of the country scenes in the Carolinas, he says:

"Most of the plantations in Carolina naturally enjoy a noble prospect of large and spacious rivers, pleasant savannas, and fine meadows, with their green liveries interwoven with beautiful flowers of most glorious colors, which the several seasons afford; hedged in with pleasant groves of the ever-famous tulip tree, the stately laurels, and bay, equalizing the oak in bigness and growth, myrtles, jessamines, woodbines, honeysuckles, and several other fragrant vines and evergreens, whose aspiring branches shadow and interweave themselves with the loftiest timbers, yielding a pleasant prospect, shade, and smell, proper habitations for the sweet singing birds, that melodiously entertain such as travel through the woods of Carolina."

Again, his description of Charleston in 1700 is interesting: "The town has very regular and fair streets, in which are good buildings of brick and

wood; and since my coming thence has had great additions of beautiful, large brick buildings, besides a strong fort and regular fortifications made to defend the town. The inhabitants by their wise management and industry have much improved the country. . . . Their cohabiting in a town has drawn to them ingenious people of most sciences, whereby they have tutors amongst them that educate their youth a la mode. . . . They have a well-disciplined militia. . . . Their officers, both infantry and cavalry, generally appear in scarlet mountings, and as rich as in most regiments belonging to the crown, which shows the richness and grandeur of this colony." Such were the days of old. In fact, to John Lawson the whole country is a land of milk and honey. He calls North Carolina (including then both the Carolinas) "a delicious country," filled with all that man can desire. "These are the blessings, under Heaven's protection, that spin out the thread of life to its utmost extent, and crown our days with the sweets of health and plenty, which, when joined with content, renders the possessors the happiest race of men upon earth."

Innumerable illustrations of Lawson's keen observation might be given. The Indian he considers a remarkable people. "Their eyes are commonly full and manly, and their gait sedate and majestic. They never walk backward and forward, as we do, nor contemplate on the affairs of loss and gain, the things which daily perplex us. They are dexterous and steady, both as to their hands and feet, to admiration. They will walk over deep brooks and creeks on the smallest poles, and that without fear or concern. Nay, an Indian will walk on the ridge of a barn or house and look down the gable, and spit upon the ground, as unconcerned as if he was walking on terra firma."

Are not such expressions interesting? Though written by a man who had never dabbled in literature, the book is in many parts rather fascinating, and it is never dull. By his enthusiasm for his adopted home-land, and by his observing and recording powers, he served America and American Literature with royal good-will.

VII

James Blair — (1656)

In 1685 there came to Virginia a young Scotchman so zealous in the cause of God and education that every student of Southern culture must turn toward him as its founder. His name was James Blair, and he was born in Scotland in 1656. He received his scholastic education at the University of Edinburgh, where he graduated in 1673, and until 1682 was rector of Cranston. As a quiet, conventional clergyman, he saw stretching out before him years of peacefulness and honor. And yet, through the persuasion of the Bishop of London, he gave it all up and left a land of refinement for one of uncouthness and ignorance. But these very defects of the new home seem to have fired him with zeal, and at once there came about under his leadership a great awakening of educational interest, and among the gentry, at least, a loathing of the old condition of contented ignorance. Possessing the simple, strong, shrewd, persevering, positive, and energetic nature of the typical Scotchman, he *had* to fight, and forthwith he found his foe.

In no doubtful terms he pointed out to the colonists their "fall from grace," as it were, and at once asked for contributions for establishing a college. The money was obtained; he went to England; he obtained a charter and more money; and in 1693 he

returned to open the school. The establishment of that first higher institution of learning in the South has already been mentioned; but the enlightening influence of William and Mary College cannot be too greatly emphasized. At its first commencement exercises people came for hundreds of miles, and some even came in boats from distant parts of New York and Pennsylvania. James Blair was, in all truth, the founder of Southern culture.

All that we have said of this man has dealt with him as a man of affairs. As a writer he deserves some attention. In 1727, with the aid of Henry Hartwell and Edward Chilton, he brought out in London a little volume entitled *The Present State of Virginia and the College.* It is a plain account with statistics and facts to prove each statement, and it praises and blames with absolute frankness. According to this book, the country has wonderful natural advantages, but "if we inquire for . . . well educated children, for industrious and thriving people, or for an happy government in church and state . . . it is certainly . . . one of the poorest, miserablest, and worst countries in all America that is inhabited by Christians." A more strictly literary piece of work by Blair is his series of discourses on *Our Saviour's Divine Sermon on the Mount.* When a man can preach one hundred and seventeen sermons on one subject, we are bound to believe in the perseverance of the saints! However, these addresses received great praise in both England and America; and they are indeed worthy of it all. For each is short, concise, and pointed, while every one shows a man trying to display not his own ability but, rather, the ability of God. Logical and practical, they pleased both theologians and common folk; and doubtless, as in the case of his educational endeavors, their seed is bearing fruit to this day.

VIII

Of the making of books there is no end—a truism for the past as well as for the present. From the raw settlements of Virginia there was issued, in 1724, another descriptive work, by name *The Present State of Virginia.* Its author, Hugh Jones, was professor of Mathematics in William and Mary College, rector of Jamestown, chaplain of the colonial assembly, and general worker for his fellow-men. He was a practical man, who had given up a position in England in order to do this much-needed work in the new world, and in his dealings with men, as well as in his books, he showed himself a possessor of ideas, with a clear, frank way of expressing them. Having seen the need of good text-books in America, he had already written his *English Grammar, Accidence to Mathematics,* and *Accidence to Christianity,* and now, in his new literary attempt, he claimed an equally practical purpose, that of creating among the English a more intelligent interest in America.

Jones' Present State of Virginia — (1724)

Like his fellow-worker in the college, James Blair, he hides nothing. He praises the beauty of the country and the many virtues of the people, but their faults are handled with firm justice. "They are more inclinable to read men by business and conversation than to dive into books. . . . The common planters, leading easy lives, don't much admire labor or any manly exercise except horse-racing, nor diversion except cock-fighting. . . . This easy way of living and the heat of the summer make some very lazy, who are then said to be climate-struck." The same glowing accounts as in all the former writings are found in this little volume. "The plenty

of the country and the good wages given to work folks occasion very few poor, who are supported by the parish, being such as are lame, sick, or decrepit through age, distemper, accidents or some infirmities, for where there is a numerous family of poor children, the vestry takes care to bind them out apprentices, by which means they are never tormented with vagrants and vagabond beggars." Such were the "good old days" in the South.

IX

We have seen that the people of the South were, so far as education is concerned, dangerously near a state of abject poverty; but here and there throughout the colonies was a brilliant exception. The most brilliant of all was William Byrd (it is hardly necessary to mention that he was *Colonel* William Byrd), a man of such intellectual ability that even the Old World honored him as a scholar. His father had come to Virginia a few years before Bacon's Rebellion, and there in the mansion at Westover, one of the vast tracts of land owned by the family, the boy was born in 1674. Inheriting enormous wealth and possessing an intellect of great power, he added to these endowments the advantage of study and travel abroad. He studied in England, Holland, and France, received his law training in the Inner Temple, was elected a member of the Royal Society, associated with the nobility of several nations, and in early manhood returned to America, fitted in every way to be a leader of men. And it seems that he was immediately recognized as such. He was appointed receiver-general of the king's revenues, was chosen a member of the council—a position that

William Byrd — (1674-1744)

he held for thirty-seven years, was elected its president, founded the cities of Richmond and Petersburg, was sent three times as an agent to England, was at all times a "hearty friend to the liberties of his country," and wrote some of the most pleasant, sprightly, and entertaining prose in American Literature. A more versatile man has seldom lived in this land of versatility.

Yet, he was *unconsciously* a man of letters. He perhaps would have rejected the title; for such work was considered a rather doubtful occupation for a "gentleman." But today these very writings, accidental though they were, compel us to believe him, truly both a writer and a gentleman. Our memory of him rests upon four pieces of work. *A History of the Dividing Line, A Progress to the Mines, A Journey to the Land of Eden,* and his *Letters.* As the above facts show, he was a busy man, and, therefore, whatever he wrote was dashed off in brief moments of leisure. How often indeed we shall find this true of Southern writers! They were men of affairs first and men of letters afterwards. Few indeed are the names of those who made letters the first and great purpose of life. But Byrd is most happy in these hurriedly written sketches. Perhaps the very charms of the work arise from its quick conception,—such charms as freshness, originality, freedom from other men's thoughts, the personal note, and wit uncopied. That Byrd had read widely, however, is shown by his well-used library of nearly four thousand volumes, and he might have copied the customs of the best culture the world then knew. His works are the production not of a book-worm, but of a learned, observant lover of the world and of men.

In the spring and autumn of 1729 Colonel Byrd ran the dividing line between Virginia and North Carolina, and the result of these sixteen weeks of

travel was a little book entitled *A History of the Dividing Line*, a volume full of charm to this day—save for North Carolinians! For the colonel was first a Virginian and then an American, and he loved to pour out sarcasm on his neighbor, the Old North State. He admitted that over in Virginia they built in one district a church costing fifty dollars and a tavern costing five hundred; but that, of course, was but another sign of Virginia hospitality. But in North Carolina, according to Byrd, there were no churches at all. The only people who have no religion are "the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope and of North Carolina. They (the North Carolina Hottentots) account it among their greatest advantages that they are not priest-ridden, not remembering that the clergy is really guilty of bestriding such as have the misfortune to be poor. . . . They do not know Sunday from any other day any more than Robinson Crusoe did; which would give them a great advantage were they given to be industrious. But they keep so many Sabbaths every week that their disregard of the seventh day has no manner of cruelty in it, either to servants or cattle." It would seem, also, that these Carolinians had no taste for classic architecture. "A citizen here," Byrd declares, "is counted extravagant if he has ambition to aspire to a brick chimney." Again: "They pay no tribute either to God or Cæsar." Of one citizen and his consort the author gives this description: "As for raiment he depended mostly upon his length of beard, and she upon her length of hair, part of which she brought decently forward, and the rest dangled behind quite down to her rump, like one of Herodotus' East Indian Pigmies. Thus did these wretches live in a dirty state of nature and were mere Adamites, innocence only excepted."

But it must not be thought that Byrd's writings show only the sarcastic jester; the humorous element is but one entertaining trait among many. He notes accurately and tersely facts about men, customs, animals, soil, climate, geology, botany, a host of subjects, and everywhere is shown the learned versatility of the man. Notice his recital of the Indian legend of a Christ:

"These Indians have a very old Tradition amongst them, that many years ago their Nation was grown so dishonest, that no man could keep any goods, or so much as his loving Wife to himself. That, however, their God, being unwilling to root them out for their crimes, did them the honor to send a Messenger from Heaven to instruct them, and set Them a perfect Example of Integrity and kind Behavior towards one another.

"But this holy Person, with all his Eloquence and Sanctity of Life was able to make very little Reformation amongst them. Some few Old men did listen a little to his Wholesome Advice, but all the Young fellows were quite incorrigible. They not only neglected his Precepts but derided and Evil Entreated his Person. At last, taking upon Him to reprove some young Rakes of the Conechta Clan very sharply for their impiety, they were so provok'd at the Freedom of his Rebukes that they tied him to a Tree and shot him with Arrows through the heart. But their God took instant Vengeance on all who had a hand in that monstrous Act, by Lightning from Heaven, and has ever since visited their Nation with a continued Train of Calamities, nor will he ever leave off punishing and wasting their People till he shall have blotted every living Soul of them out of the World."

It is unnecessary to notice in detail his other works. Three years after writing the *Dividing Line,* he wrote his *Progress to the Mines,* and in 1733, after making

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a visit to his estate in North Carolina, in which State a Governor Eden once ruled, he wrote his *Journey to the Land of Eden.* The sarcasm of the title is sufficiently plain. In all these books he showed himself an ideal American, robust but not rough, learned but not pedantic, humorous but not silly. The closing lines of the inscription on his grave form a most fitting tribute: "To all this [his training] were added a great elegancy of taste and life, the well-bred gentleman, and polite companion, the splendid economist and prudent father of a family, with the constant enemy of all exorbitant power, and hearty friend to the liberties of his country. Nat. Mar. 28, 1674. Mort. Aug. 26, 1744. An. ætat. 70."

X

William Stith — (1689-1755)

Once more let us notice the fact that the only college in the Southern colonies made its impress on Southern Literature. This time the writer is WILLIAM STITH, president of William and Mary College from 1752 until his death in 1755. He was a native of the colony, having been born on one of the great estates in 1689, and, as a preacher, teacher, chaplain to the House of Burgesses, president of the college, and general leader in intellectual movements, he led the same busy, thoughtful life as characterized some other writers whom we have noticed. Through his family influence, training, and mental endowments, he was enabled to know just where and how to find facts, statistics, and general data concerning the birth and growth of the young colony; and, hence, when he, at the age of fifty-eight, sat down to write the history of his *native land,* he was indeed prepared for the task.

The first volume was published at Williamsburg in 1747 and was called *The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia.* If Stith had carried out the complete plan of the work, there would have been probably eight volumes; but the labor was never finished. The one volume is by no means a light piece of work. In its more than three hundred pages there is a conscientious presentation of details and of proofs that reveals the nature of a true scholar. Perhaps there is too much of this in the narrative; for after all he tells the story of only the first seventeen years of the colony's existence. Thomas Jefferson complains that the writer is inelegant, but admits that he is very exact; and, indeed, throughout all the dignified, sustained effort we feel that here are accuracy and the confidence of research. "I take it," Stith declares, "to be the main part of the duty and office of an historian to paint men and things in their true and lively colors, and to do that justice to the vices and follies of princes and great men after their death which it is not safe or proper to do whilst they are alive."

Like Beverley and Blair before him, he speaks simply and frankly. James I, he says, was "forever erring very learnedly, with a wise saw or Latin sentence in his mouth; for he had been bred up under Buchanan, one of the brightest geniuses and most accomplished scholars of that age, who had given him Greek and Latin in great waste and profusion, but it was not in his power to give him good sense." Plain and straightforward as his language generally is, it does not lack an element of vivid picturesqueness. There are, indeed, some splendid descriptive passages in the book. One of the most interesting is the portion devoted to the man whom he admired and loved above all other colonial figures—John Smith. In closing the story he thus sums up the virtues of the gallant captain:

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"I shall finish his character with the testimonies of some of his soldiers and fellow adventurers. They own him to have made justice his first guide and experience his second. That he was ever fruitful in expedients, to provide for the people under his command. . . . That he rather chose to lead than send his soldiers into danger; and, upon all hazardous or fatiguing expeditions, always shared everything equally with his company and never desired any of them to do or undergo anything that he was not ready to do or undergo himself. That he hated baseness, sloth, pride, and indignity, more than any danger; that he would suffer want rather than borrow; and starve sooner than not pay; that he loved action more than words; and hated falsehood and covetousness worse than death; and that his adventures gave life and subsistency to the colony, and his loss was their ruin and destruction. . . . That his wit, courage, and success here were worthy of eternal memory. . . . That he had nothing in him counterfeit or shy, but was open, honest, and sincere; and that they never knew a soldier before him so free from those military vices of wine, tobacco, debts, dice, and oaths."

These are the words of a man looking back with pride on his country's past. When William Stith wrote such expressions there were men and women, natives of America, whose hearts filled with pride for their home-land. This, then, was in fact a period of national consciousness, a time when there was developing a home-love that, within a few years, should lead the entire people into a long, continued war of protest.

XI.

In conclusion, let us notice briefly a few other writers of these last years of the period; for, although William Stith wrote his *History* in 1747, the next distinct movement in Southern Literature had begun and was asserting itself plainly by the year 1740. Among these less important writers may be mentioned Francis Yonge, surveyor-general of South Carolina in 1719 and author of *A Narrative of the Proceedings* (1726). It is an interesting account and shows that even at so early a date the South Carolinians were getting into practice for future rebellion. Another author was Sir John Randolph (1693-1737) who, because of his position as attorney-general of Virginia, knew personally all the leaders in colonial life in his day, and who fortunately recorded his impressions in a chatty, familiar little *Breviate Book*. And still another was Alexander Garden. Garden was a Scotchman who came to South Carolina in 1720 and lived in Charleston until his death in 1756. For more than thirty-four years he was rector of St. Philip's in that city, and was, besides, during much of that time, commissary to the Bishop of London for the Carolinas, Georgia, and the Bahama Islands. A man of strong, stern opinions, just to all persons, strict in his own actions, and expecting strictness in the actions of all others, he soon became a power in Southern religious life. Not one whit did he ever relax from the creed and law of his Church. According to David Ramsay, the historian of South Carolina, he gave to the poor exactly one-tenth of his income, and he never accepted more or less for performing a marriage ceremony than the amount stated in the church law.

The cause of his introduction into this discussion of Southern Literature is his vigorous tirade against

Garden's Sermons — (1740)

the great evangelist, George Whitefield, who had come to America to carry on a revival. In 1740 Garden wrote two sermons, entitled *Regeneration* and *The Testimony of the Spirit,* and based on the text: "They who have turned the world upside down have come hither also." He hammered Whitefield most unmercifully. During the same year he wrote six heated letters addressed to Whitefield, and in 1743 he reviewed the whole affair in a long letter to a friend. Garden was a confident and sharp controversialist; indeed, in the New England States, with a people more interested in religious affairs, he doubtless would have shone brightly. He was not a man of flattery. "As to the state of religion in this province," he wrote, "it is bad enough, God knows. Rome and the Devil have contrived to crucify her 'twixt two thieves—Infidelity and Enthusiasm. The former, alas, too often still prevails; but as to the latter, thanks to God, it is greatly subsided, and even at the point of vanishing away. We had here trances, visions, and revelations, both 'mongst blacks and whites, in abundance. . . . Bad also is the present state of the poor orphan-house in Georgia,—that land of lies, and from which we have no truth, but what they can neither disguise nor conceal. The whole colony is accounted here one great lie from the beginning to this day; and orphan-house, you know, is a part of the whole—a scandalous bubble."

We close the second period of Southern Literature. No longer do the authors write books for England; they have readers at home, and that home is America. Local history and local pride have been created, and there is heard now the voice of a people

that feels itself to be different in environments, inclinations, and tendencies from the inhabitants of the mother country. National consciousness is created; in its wake come protest and, at last,—Revolution.

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

(1740-1810)

I

John Fiske has called the period from 1676 to 1776 a century of "political education." It was truly a time of great advance in the intellectual standing of the common people; for, whereas the rural classes of the seventeenth century thought but little and read less, their descendants of the eighteenth century were a wide-awake people, knowing the movements of the world and studying the questions of government and of general law. Among the aristocratic classes there was oftentimes a culture comparing favorably with that of the mother country. James Blair, Hugh Jones, and their followers had not labored in vain.

In the latter half of the seventeenth century the English ardor for knowledge had been cooled momentarily, but only momentarily, by the rude plentifulness of the new way of living. Popular free education had been a part of the earliest plans of the Virginia Company. In 1621 the corporation had resolved to appropriate funds for a free school, to be called the East India School, and to be established at Charles City. Then, to follow this, there was to be a university, and a fund of several thousand pounds had been given for this purpose. George Thorpe came over to manage the undertaking, but

in the fearful massacre of 1622 he perished, and with him many who were enthusiastic about the idea. Then followed the loss of power by the company, and the control of colonial affairs passed into the hands of people who cared more for American tobacco than for American education. Thus the revival in things intellectual was delayed until the coming of Blair in 1692.

By 1740, however, there was a vast improvement. Large estates, cultivated by wholesale slave labor, had come into existence, and a peculiar type of aristocratic, or, in some respects, patriarchal society was growing in Virginia. Leisure and wealth came as results. By 1777 William and Mary had developed into an embryo university, with departments of law and medicine; and year by year it was sending forth leaders of Southern thought. Fiske, in summing up the history of this ancient institution, says: "Though until lately its number of students at one time has never reached one hundred and fifty, it has given to our country fifteen senators and seventy representatives in Congress; seventeen governors of States and thirty-seven judges; three presidents of the United States:—Jefferson, Monroe, and Tyler; and the great Chief Justice Marshall. It was a noble work for America that was done by the Scotch parson, James Blair."

Art, music, and literature now gained some share of attention, and the table in the dining-room ceased to be the chief center of interest in the mansion. Good private libraries became more frequent; paintings from "the Old Country" appeared in the great rooms; and musical instruments held an honored place in not a few homes. Among the effects of a Virginia musician who died in 1755 were Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and *Apollo's Feast,* four books of the instrumental scores of Handel's oratorios, ten

books of Handel's songs, the score of several Corelli sonatas, and the productions of several other standard composers. By 1716 Williamsburg had a theatre, and from time to time English companies went there and to Charleston. Amidst the steady growth of such environments Southern Letters should have developed into a high degree of artistic excellence. Early colonial literature was a literature of manners and customs, modeled after the English prose of the beginning of the eighteenth century, and authors might indeed have gone on indefinitely copying the observant, personal, humorous note of the *Spectator,* the *Tatler,* and the *Rambler.* But the Revolution loomed up, and in its questions was absorbed the greater intellectual life of both the North and the South.

It would seem, moreover, that the genius of the Southerner tended toward the making and interpreting of law and government. In the North the church and the town-hall were the Meccas of thought; but in the South the court-house was the one center of genius and talent. Court-day "was a holiday for all the country-side, especially in the fall and spring. From all directions came in the people on horseback, in wagons, and afoot. On the court-house green assembled in indiscriminate confusion, people of all classes,—the hunter from the backwoods, the owner of a few acres, the grand proprietor, and the grinning, heedless negro. Old debts were settled, and new ones made; there were auctions, transfers of property, and, if election times were near, stump-speaking." From such an environment came thrilling orations, forceful state-papers, and that nation-creating bill of rights, the *Declaration of Independence.* Some critics may protest, indeed, that such works are not literature, but if by "literature" be meant the written expression

of a people's thoughts, permeated with passion and stern conviction, then the Revolutionary period had a literature, and that of noble quality.

Strangely enough, we shall find that nearly all the writings are in *prose*. When the Germans and the French go through the fiery furnace of war, they never fail to come forth enriched by a new burst of song, deep in sentiment, beautiful in form, lasting in quality. But little true lyric verse came with the American Revolution, not even in that lyric-producing section, the South; and save for a few bits of energetic doggerel, scarcely any poetic inheritance whatever was left. The rude verses may indeed have inspired the Revolutionary heroes in their march toward freedom; but in the march of time these songs have been shorn of influence and even of a memory.

In this first of the great moments "that tried men's souls" we shall find an eloquent, strenuous, and often bitter tone. No literature for literature's sake at this time, mark you; but, rather, a literature for a cause, a protest, a setting down of fundamental principles, a striving toward a true perception of man's relations to man.

II

A True Narrative of Georgia

In 1740, when the colony of Georgia was but seven years of age, three citizens of that settlement quarreled with Governor Oglethorpe about their rights and the rights of men in general; and these rebellious subjects were at length compelled to flee. Their names were Patrick Tailfer, Hugh Anderson, and David Douglas. As their names indicate, they were Scotch-Irish, a determined folk who, according to some wit, "hold fast to the commandments of God and everything else

they can get their hands on." In this case they held fast to their argument. Early in the strife the three Georgians retreated to Charleston, and there and in London they published a bitter tirade against Oglethorpe, entitled *A True and Historical Narrative of Georgia.*

It is a small book of one hundred and twelve pages; but, with its hammering method of relating facts and proofs, it must have seemed to the governor a grievously large volume. It is a thundering blast at the ignorance, unworthiness, and despotism of the English colonial policy. Throwing high-flown theories to the winds, it fearlessly charges Oglethorpe and his officers with tyrannical and cruel use, or misuse, of power, and calls upon the people to throw off the yoke and assert their rights to liberty. It is an early war-cry of the American Revolution.

The book, as Professor Moses Coit Tyler has pointed out, contains these seven particulars,—delusive reports in England of the natural advantages of Georgia, restrictions upon the tenure and use of its lands, enormous quit-rents, paralysis of agriculture through Oglethorpe's refusal to admit negro-labor, the cruel abuse of authority by Oglethorpe and his subordinates, their neglect of manufactures, and, finally, Oglethorpe's perversion of moneys entrusted to him in Christian charity for the erection of churches and schools. By its frequently restrained and certain tone and by its calm statements of facts it compels belief, and, at times, has something of the merciless nature of a scientific investigation. And what are its accusations? "Very looks were criminal; and the grand sin of withstanding . . . authority was punished without mercy." The picture of Georgia is pathetic in its bitter simplicity. "Her plantations a wild, her towns a desert, her villages in rubbish, her improvements a byword, and her

liberties a jest, an object of pity to friends, and of insult, contempt and ridicule to enemies." Thus the description continues.

But beyond all this is the exquisite sarcasm displayed in the dedication of the book to *Oglethorpe*. His name, with titles of every description, stands at the head, and with a most humble and mocking sarcasm "Your Excellency" is thrust in from time to time. This is indeed the American gift of talking back. "May it please your Excellency, as the few surviving remains of the colony of Georgia find it necessary to present the world, and in particular Great Britain, with a true state of that province from its first rise to its present period, your Excellency of all mankind, is but entitled to the dedication as the principal author of its present strength and affluence, freedom, and prosperity." The authors compliment him on the highly distressing condition of the colony. Many countries "fondly imagine it necessary to communicate to such young settlements the fullest rights and properties, all the immunities of their mother-countries, and privileges rather more extensive. . . . But your Excellency's concern for our perpetual welfare could never permit you to propose such transitory advantages for us. You considered riches, like a divine and a philosopher, as the *irritamenta malorum,* and knew that they were disposed to inflate weak minds with pride, to hamper the body with luxury and introduce a long variety of evils. Thus have you 'protected us from ourselves,' as Mr. Waller says, by keeping all earthly comforts from us. You have afforded us the opportunity of arriving at the integrity of the primitive times by entailing a more than primitive poverty on us. . . . The valuable virtue of humility is secured to us by your care to prevent our procuring, or so much as seeing any negroes . . . lest our

simplicity might mistake the poor Africans for greater slaves than ourselves . . .

'Like Death you reign
O'er silent subjects and a desert plain.' "

Thus the literature of protest is fairly inaugurated in the South. And notice that the very element in which American Literature excels, humor, again comes to the assistance of a great cause. Constantly the bitterness increases; taunting is replaced by threats; and bolder declarations of the rights of the governed are issued. We are reviewing a period, not of artistic, but of earnest, virile literature.

III

In the writing of any history of Literature it is a question not so much of what to say as of what not to say. So many facts might be recorded, so many interesting sidelights might be given; but, plainly, in any volume that is not a mere catalogue or encyclopedia only those names that seem to betoken some distinct step in the trend of a people's thoughts and emotions can and should receive consideration. It would be highly improper, if not absolutely unprofitable, to attempt a consideration of all. For instance, *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia* (1742) by William Stephens, president of the colony during that year, might receive attention; for it gives the other side of the controversy between the exiled Georgians, mentioned in previous pages, and the authorities of the settlement. But, since the book has neither great artistic merit nor characteristic thoughts and sentiments of the era, it does not merit lengthy discussion. In our study of Southern Letters, therefore, be it remembered that those works receiving "honorable mention" must contain one or

the other of these two characteristics: artistic excellence or characteristic phases of contemporary life, thought, and sentiment.

Few indeed were the productions of high artistic quality. For the period now before us was preeminently an age of constructive statesmanship, and the best intellectual energies were all employed more or less in the great work of creating a nation. Therefore, because of the peculiar trend of all thought in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the literature, not only of the South, but of the North, found its best expression in discussions of the rights of man, declarations, state papers, and spirited orations. The men of such an era write, not through love of literature, but because their overwrought souls compel expression of sincere emotion.

IV

William Henry Drayton — (1742-1779)

In William Henry Drayton (1742-1779) we have just such a man. Drayton, who was a South Carolinian, has been called the political ancestor of John C. Calhoun, and he well deserves the title. For from the day when he returned, as a very young man, from his studies at Oxford University, he made the power of his justice and his uncompromising sense of duty felt throughout the entire South. In 1760, when associations were being formed everywhere for the purpose of arousing patriotism, he wrote a protest against such assemblies, declaring that they would soon infringe on the rights of the individual States. This is the first public expression of states'-rights in America. King George, however, misinterpreted the paper and, having come to the conclusion that Drayton was rebuking the colonists for their rebel-

lious spirit, rewarded the young man with a position as judge of a South Carolina circuit.

But when, in 1774, the conditions were such that it became dangerous to speak frankly, this man revealed the true meaning of his former expression by his *Letter of a Freeman to the Deputies of America in the High Court of Congress Assembled at Philadelphia.* It was a strong, clear-minded appeal to the sense of justice, and to this day it is decidedly interesting reading. It was not long (1776) until the new government appointed him Chief Justice of his native State, and it was then he declared from the judge's bench that, so far as South Carolina was concerned, King George had abdicated the throne. It was while he was a member of the Continental Congress in 1778 and working with remarkable zeal for the new nation, that he suddenly became ill and died.

Of such a character were the leaders of colonial life and thought. This man, a judge, a statesman, an orator, an official who was busy every hour of the day, found time not only to write his stirring papers on statecraft, but also to compile a great amount of material for his *History of the American Revolution.* Remember that with such men writing was necessarily a work of the moment, the result of minutes stolen from the ever-calling duties of the times.

V

Patrick Henry — (1736-1799)

This, as a period of constructive statesmanship, was naturally a time of oratory. The voices of men who could fuse the varied feelings of the people were in demand, and, therefore, we find in every colony, speakers who, by sincerity and passion, thrilled their audiences into effective activity. Such a man was Patrick Henry.

He was born at Studley, Hanover County, Virginia, in 1736, and from the time of his birth until his fifteenth or sixteenth year very few people were able to see any good reason for his being alive. To say that as a boy he was downright lazy would be perhaps a violent assertion; but his principal occupation in those early years seems to have been that of taking as little interest as possible in any human affair. Dull and careless, he was pointed out as the most indolent boy in the neighborhood.

But suddenly there came into this boy's life a great awakening. One day an old teacher came into the country store where Henry was clerking and began to tell the ancient stories of Greece and Rome. Instantly the boy's attention was attracted, and from that hour he was a different being. He learned to love two subjects which formerly he had been too indolent either to love or to despise—history and literature. He saw the world in a different light; he realized his weakness and his power. His reading of Cicero aroused the desire to become a lawyer; but at the age of eighteen he had married, and now the cares of a family retarded him in such study. Nevertheless, at the age of twenty-four, he was admitted to the bar. And there in the county courthouse near his home, he won his earliest fame as an orator. The clergy of Virginia had rebelled at the amount of fees paid them and had carried the matter into the colonial courts. Success seemed to be theirs, and the defendants were in despair. Then it was that Patrick Henry arose and made a defense so marvelous that his listeners were benumbed with wonder. "They can only tell you," writes his biographer, Wirt, "that they were taken captive and followed whithersoever he led them, and that at his bidding, the tears flowed from pity, or the cheeks flushed from indignation, and when it was over they

felt as if they had awaked from an ecstatic dream, of which they were unable to recall or connect the particulars." It is said that during one sentence in the speech, the clergy arose in a body and fled the house. At its conclusion the people seemed wild in their joy, and, in their desire to honor the young orator, lifted him to their shoulders and carried him hither and thither through the village.

From this time forward, his rise was exceedingly rapid. In 1765 he became a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, and there presented his famous "five resolutions" on the rights of the colony. Then came in 1775 the dissolution of the assembly by order of the royal governor, the momentous meeting in old St. John's Church at Richmond, and that wildly passionate appeal ending with the words: "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

May, 1773, found him associated with Thomas Jefferson, R. H. Lee, and Dabney Carr in the preparation of a resolution leading to more united action on the part of the colonies. The next year he was a leader in the Continental Congress. He was the moving spirit in the Virginia convention of 1775, and during the next year he became governor of that colony, or State. After he had held the position three times, he retired from public life (1791) and devoted his time to his large law practice and to the historical and literary studies that he so dearly loved. He died at Red Hill, Charlotte County, Virginia, June 6, 1799.

Patrick Henry stands in the unique position of holding a place in literature without having written for it. We have no faithful copy of any of his speeches, and many of them indeed were never written. It has been declared that his eloquence was so great that none could listen and accurately report;

be this as it may, he possessed a marvelous influence over all who heard him. George Mason said of him: "He is by far the most powerful speaker that I have ever . . . heard. . . . Your passions are no longer your own when he addresses them. He is in my opinion the first man upon this continent as well in abilities as public virtues, and had he lived in Rome about the time of the first Punic War, when the Roman people had arrived at their meridian glory, and their virtues not tarnished, Patrick Henry's talents must have put him at the head of that glorious commonwealth." And yet his eloquence was not the result of art and training, but was natural and spontaneous.

In him we have the great personality that fused the heated but disconnected emotions of the American people into one vast national passion of glowing patriotism, and set moving this patriotism in the field of activity. He stands for the best that is American, touched, in addition, with the fire and eloquence of pure genius.

VI

Thomas Jefferson — (1743-1826)

On the twenty-first of June, 1775, there came to Philadelphia, as a Virginia representative to the Continental Congress, a young man well known throughout the colonies for his learning, brilliance, and ability in expressing thought. And yet this young statesman—barely thirty-two years of age—was so poor a public speaker that none found pleasure or even interest in listening to his few attempts. But given a pen, he at once became the leader of all his colleagues. His name was Thomas Jefferson.

"The Sage of Monticello," as he was affectionately called, was born at Shadwell, Albemarle county,

Virginia, in 1743, the third son among ten children. Fortunately, his was a family possessing both the inclination and the means to give him the best education that the land could afford. There was a strain of Welsh blood in his ancestry, and his whole career had something of the vivacity and imaginative temperament belonging to that race. When the boy was but fourteen his father died; but the last breath of the dying man gave the command that the son should be educated at William and Mary. Accordingly, he soon entered the institution and at once gained notoriety by his brilliant scholarship and his surpassing ugliness. Big bones, big feet, big hands, freckles and sandy hair—these were the most noticeable features; but beneath all these was a mind uncontaminated, receptive, eager, and hungering for information and new thought. Physically and mentally he was soon recognized as the strongest man in the college. He seemed to take an interest in everything, and he himself declared that year after year he studied fifteen hours a day. Every man is, at some time in his life, influenced for better or for worse by some one person; and here, within the old walls of this first of Southern colleges, Jefferson found his guiding spirit, Dr. Small, the professor of Mathematics, who "undoubtedly fixed the destinies" of the statesman's life, giving him the love of absolute freedom from prejudice and the willingness to hear and examine that characterized his entire career.

At the age of twenty-one he took charge of the family estate, and, while managing it very successfully, studied law and was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-four. He soon gained a large practice, and two years later entered public life and began that really marvelous rise toward eminence. And yet he was not an orator. A husky voice and a lack

of fluency destroyed the effect of his often thoughtful utterances, while his dislike of expressing his opinions before a crowd restrained him from making many attempts. But, as we shall see, he was a genius in at least one particular—the ability to write a finished and forceful style.

Before he was thirty he had wooed and won the beautiful widow, Mrs. Martha Skelton, and during the next year her father died, leaving him four thousand acres of farm land. Year by year his talents, wealth, and influence increased. Becoming a member of the House of Burgesses in 1769, he at once gained recognition as an apt constructer of state papers, and from that time forth passed rapidly from one office to another. Only the merest outline of his services can be given here. He drew up the bill establishing courts of justice in the State, removed the capital of Virginia to Richmond, advocated the establishment of a system of free public education, proposed the statute for religious freedom in Virginia, improved William and Mary College, founded the University of Virginia, proposed the motto *"E Pluribus Unum,"* proposed the decimal system for United States currency, caused the magnificent Louisiana Purchase, was a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, a member of the Continental Congress, governor of Virginia, three times minister to France, Vice-President of the United States, twice President of the United States, and author of the *Declaration of Independence.*

For forty-four years he was active in the public service, and, yet, when he stepped from the White House, he was so poor that he feared lest his creditors should have him arrested before he could leave Washington. Returning to his home, Monticello, he devoted his last years to the establishing of the University of Virginia. He died July 4, 1826. So

much of his time had been given to the service of his fellow-men and so little to the betterment of his own affairs that the legislatures of South Carolina and of Virginia felt it their duty to bestow upon his unmarried daughter the sum of ten thousand dollars. *Not* excepting Washington, he of all Americans, save Lincoln, most nearly approached the ideal citizen of a democracy; for he truly believed that every man was his brother, and therefore entitled to his services. And that those services were the only claim which he wished to have on the memory of posterity is plainly shown in the words placed, at his request, upon his tomb:

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Author of the Declaration of Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia.

It is under the first of these claims that Jefferson deserves attention in this study. His *Autobiography,* his *Parliamentary Manual,* his *Notes on the State of Virginia,* his papers on Hamilton and Adams, his *State Papers,* and his *Letters,* all have a decidedly literary quality; but the greatest, most far-reaching piece of writing done by him or any other man of his day was the *Declaration of Independence.*

When, on the twenty-first of June, 1775, the young Virginian became a member of the Continental Congress, he entered, as John Adams has said, with "a reputation for literature and a happy talent for composition." His first public paper of consequence was written in 1769 and was entitled *Resolutions of the Virginia House of Burgesses.* It was a rather weak, conciliating article; but it showed that even

then a remarkable facility with the pen was his. In 1774 appeared his second important document, published at Williamsburg, Virginia, and entitled *A Summary View of the Rights of British America,* a strong, frank, and aggressive statement declaring the colonies "free and independent." With what success that call was answered succeeding years have told.

Many indeed have been the unfriendly criticisms hurled at the *Declaration of Independence,* but all admit that its author was a skillful phrase-maker; he could, in fact, say the final word on a subject. Throughout his career he had gained fame for epigrammatic statements: "The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest;" "Only aim to do your duty, and mankind will give you credit when you fail;" "Let those flatter who fear; it is not an American art;" "Government has nothing to do with opinion;" "Compulsion makes hypocrites, not converts;" "It is error alone that needs the support of government; truth can stand by itself." He was indeed just such a spokesman as the aroused, yet fearing and often despairing, colonists needed. It has been claimed that the *Declaration of Independence* is not original. We might well ask ourselves, What is? The test of genius is not necessarily originality in fundamental thoughts, but, rather, the power to express the common ideas of mankind as they have never been expressed before. Without doubt Jefferson borrowed his ideas here, there and everywhere. Some of them may be seen in the *Magna Charta* itself. But note this fact: he took the crude conceptions of his fellow-men and made these conceptions instruments and weapons of emancipation. Most contemporary literature is temporary; but we cannot conceive of a time when the *Declaration of Independence* will not rouse the emotions of

man. Yet, Rufus Choate has called it a mass of "glittering and sounding generalities of natural right," and many critics have agreed with him.

The paper could not have had complete originality. Originality would have been fatal. It had to be an expression of those emotions that had been struggling for a century in the hearts of the people; otherwise it would not have been accepted. "He deemed," says George Tucker, in his *Life of Jefferson,* "the diffusion of knowledge among the people essential to the wise administration of a popular government and even to its stability," and to the abiding common sense of the *people* this appeal was made. Its style has been attacked as bombastic and high-flown; but, as Moses Coit Tyler has pointed out, it is written in the vernacular of all great state-papers since the *Magna Charta.* Suppose Franklin, with his blunt, humorous, earthy way of saying things, had written the document; it would never have brought conviction to earnest souls. It, however, "made these colonies all alive." In choosing Thomas Jefferson as their spokesman, the founders of a new nation acted with most fortunate wisdom; for, coming from a section where there were a philosophic tendency, a lack of the shrewdness, and a lack of the immediate practicalness so characteristic of New England, he possessed a broad nobility of intellect, an imaginative sympathy, and a soul filled with the ideals and best aspirations of his thrilling era.

The great document served its purpose, and the nation still respects it and acknowledges its influence. It undoubtedly gave a solid basis to the colonial conviction of justice; it undoubtedly aided in the abolition of slavery; it undoubtedly will assert itself again in times of turbulence. It is founded on eternal principles; its power cannot perish.

VII

That year, 1775, brought to light a host of gifted men. It was on the sixteenth of June in this same year that GEORGE WASHINGTON made his speech of practical patriotism, accepting the appointment as commander-in-chief. Then it was, too, that RICHARD HENRY LEE of Virginia wrote the address, adopted by Congress, showing good and just cause for rebellion. Then, too, there began to write for the public such men as HENRY LAURENS (1724-1792), who in his *Narrative of Confinement in the Tower* tells of his suffering for America's sake; JOSEPH GALLOWAY (1730-1803), who, in 1780, wrote his *Cool Thoughts on the Consequences in Great Britain of American Independence;* JOHN DICKINSON (1732-1808), whose political writings were so confident and acute; DAVID RAMSAY (1749-1815), the historian of Virginia; and JAMES MADISON (1751-1836), the author of some of the strongest essays in *The Federalist.* Some of these deserve more extended study.

George Washington — (1732-1799)

George Bancroft has said of Washington: "Whatever he took in hand, he applied himself to it with ease, and his papers which have been prepared show how he almost imperceptibly gained the power of writing correctly; always expressing himself with clearness and directness, often with felicity and grace." And yet, as a boy, Washington's opportunities for training along literary lines were exceedingly limited. The father died when the child was but eleven years of age; his life in a sparsely settled country was not conducive to extensive study; but, fortunately, he had a wonderful mother, a woman whose wisdom, reserve, and moderation imbued themselves into the soul of her son.

He was born in 1732, at Pope's Creek, Virginia, no great distance from Fredericksburg. His schooling was limited to a few months at a private institution in that town and a short term at a school near his birthplace. It was during the latter course that he received his only lessons in geometry and surveying. His individuality was always marked. As a very small boy his truthfulness and justice were so recognized that his word or decision on any disputed point was accepted as final by his schoolmates. But this school-life ended when he was sixteen, and at that age we find him holding a commission from the president of William and Mary College as public surveyor of Culpeper county. Thus early forced into the trackless wilderness to rely upon himself, he naturally developed into a strong, fearless, self-reliant man. At nineteen he became adjutant-general; and from that time on the story of his life is so minutely told in the narrative of his country's origin that we need not relate it here.

While on a visit to Williamsburg in 1758, he met the beautiful widow, Mrs. Custis, and his courtship was successful. "The wedding," says an old description, "was one of the most brilliant ever seen in a church in Virginia. The bridegroom wore a suit of blue cloth, the coat being lined with red silk and ornamented with silver trimming; his waistcoat was embroidered with white satin, his knee-buckles were gold, and his hair was powdered. The bride was dressed in a white satin-quilted petticoat, a heavily corded white silk overdress, diamond buckles, and pearl ornaments." It was at this time that Washington resigned his commission and retired to Mount Vernon to enjoy the country life that he so greatly loved. A few months later he was called to Williamsburg to receive thanks for services to his country. He was so embarrassed that he trembled

and stammered in his effort to respond. The words of the chairman form a just description of the great man's character. "Sit down," said he, "your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess." In 1775 he was again called forth from his retirement to become commander-in-chief of the army, and again, in 1789, to become President of the new nation. Not until 1797 did he gain the longed-for opportunity to return to his home, and yet he enjoyed it but two years; for then came death.

The collected writings of Washington fill twelve octavo volumes, and not a few of these pages are splendid examples of their kind of writing. His letters are especially illuminating, while his addresses have a dignity and broadness about them befitting the occasion of their birth. So simple, so sensible, so true to himself: we involuntarily say. Everywhere are those qualities for which he was noted—reserve and common sense. In his expressions he was neither highly elegant nor graceful; he simply said what he believed. And, yet, what practical nobility is in many of his words. When accepting his commission as commander-in-chief, June 16, 1775, he said: "As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress, that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment, at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those, I doubt not, they will discharge, and that is all I desire."

His *Farewell Address,* pathetic in its circumstances, profound in its thought, and practical in its every word, shows a man whom more than forty years of service for others had made a philosopher.

"The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence; the support of your tranquillity at home; your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. . . . It is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; . . . watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; . . . and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts."

VIII

Laurens' Narrative of the Confinement in the Tower of London — (1782)

If we wish to know the bitterness and the cruelty of war, we can hardly go to a better source than Laurens' *Narrative of the Confinement in the Tower of London* (1782). It is a plain little story; told with simplicity and grace, and yet in every part most pathetic. And well it might be; for its author, Henry Laurens, told but the true narrative of a bitter period in his life.

He was born at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1724, and there received his education and early amassed his great fortune. In 1771, he took his children abroad to have them educated, and met many of the most illustrious men of the period. He early took a practical interest in colonial affairs, and, wealthy as he was, he served in person through some of the rough campaigns

against the Indians. In 1775 we find him a member of the Continental Congress, of which he afterwards became the president, and president of the Council of Safety; he was vice-president of South Carolina in 1770, again a member of the Continental Congress in 1777, a commissioner to Holland to secure a treaty and a loan, and one of the ministers appointed in 1782 to negotiate peace with Great Britain. Worn out in the service of his country, he died at Charleston in 1792.

It was while on the voyage to Holland in 1780 that he was captured by the British and confined for fifteen months in the Tower of London. Here he passed those days of such cruel humiliation that the simple narration of them rouses one's blood. Yet he was a sturdy old fellow—"the noblest Roman of them all," Tyler calls him. "As I was entering the house, I heard some of the people say, 'Poor old gentleman, bowed down with infirmities. He is come to lay his bones here.' My reflection was, 'I shall not leave a bone with you.'" And thus he goes on, weaving his interesting story. "And now I found myself a close prisoner indeed; shut up in two small rooms, which together made about twenty feet square; a warder my constant companion; and a fixed bayonet under my window; not a friend to converse with, and no prospect of a correspondence." Having been tempted to escape, he writes, "I had always said, 'I hate the name of a runaway.' At length I put a stop to farther application by saying, 'I will not attempt to escape. The gates were opened for me to enter; they shall be opened for me to go out of the Tower. God Almighty sent me here for some purpose. I am determined to see the end of it.'" It all makes a fascinating story, this picture of an uncompromising, manly soul, and contains the germ of a real classic, if genius should seize upon it.

IX

The fact must never be lost sight of that this was an era of constructive statesmanship, a period when all men of extraordinary intellectual power devoted their genius, not to scientific or poetic inventions, but to earnest striving for truth as it concerns human rights and government. It was just such a trend of thought that brought forth the really magnificent collection of political papers embodied in *The Federalist,* and caused the development of such a character as JAMES MADISON, one of the contributors.

James Madison — (1751-1836)

Madison, who was naturally of a philosophic turn of mind, fortunately had splendid advantages in observing the development of the "nation-feeling" and the gradual rise of governmental institutions. Born at Port Conway, Virginia, in 1751, he spent his boyhood among men who had the desire and leisure in abundance to discuss and study the movements in the politic world, and statecraft in general; and when, at the age of twenty, he graduated from Princeton, the spirit of rebellion had pervaded every nook and hamlet of his country. Nine years later we find him a delegate from Virginia to the Continental Congress, and in 1787 a member of the Constitutional Convention. From 1789 to 1797 he represented his State in Congress; in 1798 he drew up the Virginia Resolutions; in 1801 he was Secretary of State; in 1808 and again in 1812, he was chosen President of the United States. It was under his administration, therefore, that the second war with Great Britain was declared. A man with such a record might well write with authority on the fundamental principles of government making and government maintenance.

Today his opinions on such matters demand the respectful attention of all students of constitutional history; for in their logical clearness, confidence, and firmness, they stand out in relief amidst the impassioned eloquence of many of his contemporaries. And, yet, by their very reserve and calm deliberateness, his writings have a certain intense eloquence. "But why," he writes in *The Federalist,* "is the experiment of an extended Republic to be rejected merely because it may comprise what is new? Is it not the glory of the people of America, that, whilst they have paid a decent regard to the opinions of former times and other nations, they have not suffered a blind veneration for antiquity, for custom, or for names, to overrule the suggestions of their own good sense, the knowledge of their own situation, and the lessons of their own experience? . . . Happily for America,—happily, we trust, for the whole human race, they pursued a new and more noble course. . . . They reared the fabrics of government which have no model on the face of the globe."

Madison's appeal was to the intellect rather than to the emotions. His writings put the statement before you boldly but calmly; they give the "pro's" and "con's" of the argument; they measured the value of each; they show illustrations from history; they make a comparative study of governments; there is a touch of the philosopher in it all. As John Fiske says, "he was pre-eminently the scholar, the profound constructive thinker, and his limitations were such as belong to that character." And, yet, beneath the exterior of this "profound constructive thinker," was the warm heart of a patriot, a man whose words of advice are worthy of memory. "The advice nearest to my heart and deepest in my convictions is, That the Union of the States be

cherished and perpetuated. Let the open enemy to it be regarded as a Pandora with her box open, and the disguised one as the serpent creeping with his deadly wiles into Paradise."

X

The period was not without its historians and biographers. Especially is this true of the closing years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. When, after years of excitement, privation, and war, the nation assumed its national character and began its marvelous career of development, men who, in its creation, had given the energies of their minds to constructive legislation, now began, in their later days, to look back along that strange path of history and to see then, as never before, the real greatness of their deeds. We shall find in these more peaceful writings the same talent that characterized the more impassioned utterances of the war days. Chief among such writers in the South were David Ramsay (1749-1815), John Marshall (1755-1835), "Parson" Mason L. Weems (1760-1825), and William Wirt (1772-1834).

David Ramsay — (1749-1815)

It must be remembered that an exceedingly small number of Southern writers have been writers by profession. They have been lawyers or physicians or planters or workers in the more practical, money-making professions of life, and writers only because their tastes and their leisure were so fortunate as to meet in literature. Of such a type was David Ramsay. He was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, but after graduating at Princeton and taking a medical course at the University of Pennsylvania, he removed to

Charleston, South Carolina, and there soon gained fame as a physician and as an ardent advocate of American rights. He was made a delegate to the Continental Congress, was a member of the Committee of Safety, became a surgeon in the army, was one of forty prominent citizens sent as hostages to St. Augustine after the capture of Charleston in 1780, and was in confinement for eleven months. His death was a tragic one; he was shot in the streets of Charleston by a maniac.

A man who thus knew the events and characters of the great struggle one would naturally consider very capable of writing a trustworthy history. Such is indeed the case. His work is impartial, filled with evidences of personal knowledge, and written with a vivacity that shows his memory to have been vivid. And it is surprising, too, to see how much this busy man of the world found time to write. Besides his orations and medical essays there are his *History of the Revolution in South Carolina* (1785), his *History of the American Revolution* (1789), his *Life of Washington* (1797), his *History of South Carolina* (1809), his *History of the United States* (1846), and his twelve volumes entitled *Universal History Americanized* (1819). All of these are written with a fullness, a confidence, and an easiness of style that show the old physician to have gone to a very fine school for historians—the school of experience. He tells the story of what he himself has seen and heard, and there is often a resulting picturesqueness. Notice, for an instance of this, his description of an Indian treaty:

"When the governor had finished his speech, Chulochculak arose, and in answer spoke to the following effect:

" 'What I now speak, our father, the great king, should hear. We are brothers to the people of

Carolina, one house covers us all.' Then taking a boy by the hand, he presented him to the governor, saying, 'We, our wives, and our children, are all children of the great king George; I have brought this child that when he grows up he may remember our agreement on this day, and tell it to the next generation that it may be known forever.' Then opening his bag of earth, and laying the same at the governor's feet, he said, 'We freely surrender a part of our lands to the great king. The French want our possessions, but we will defend them while one of our nation shall remain alive.' Then, delivering the governor a string of wampum, in confirmation of what he said, he added, 'My speech is at an end—it is the voice of the Cherokee nation. I hope the governor will send it to the king that it may be kept forever.' "

It may be seen from this one illustration that David Ramsay was not a mere expounder of facts. There are throughout all his work a philosophic view and a certain broadness characteristic of a thoughtful, observant man. "Many circumstances occurred," says he, "to make the American war particularly calamitous. It was originally a civil war, in the estimation of both parties, and a rebellion to its termination in the opinion of one of them. Unfortunately for mankind, doubts have been entertained of the obligatory force of the law of nations in such cases. The refinement of modern ages has stripped war of half its horrors, but the systems of some illiberal men have tended to reproduce the barbarism of Gothic times, by withholding the benefits of that refinement from those who are effecting revolutions. An enlightened philanthropist embraces the whole human race, and inquires not whether an object of distress is or is not an unit of an acknowledged nation. It is sufficient that he is a child of the same common

parent, and capable of happiness or misery. The prevalence of such a temper would have greatly lessened the calamities of the American war, but while from contracted policy, unfortunate captives were considered as not entitled to the treatment of prisoners, they were often doomed, without being guilty, to suffer the punishment due to criminals."

There is something more than the mere narration of facts in such history as that. It is the form of spirited description which can be told only by one who has moved in the midst of stirring events. In this busy physician we have one of the first of those American historians who have made the history of their country a study of unceasing delight.

XI

John Marshall — (1755-1835)

In these, our modern days, it has become very much a fad among American writers to advocate by both example and precept the strenuous; but it is really surprising to see how actively and in what manifold ways the writers of those colonial days used their talents. We have seen it in Jefferson, Laurens, and Ramsay, and again it may be observed in the brilliant and profound chief justice, JOHN MARSHALL. He was a native of Virginia, and, *therefore,* since he did not choose to become a doctor or a preacher, he naturally studied law. After having served in the Revolution, he built up a splendid practice in Richmond and took a prominent part in the movements immediately preceding and following the formation of the constitutional government. He was a member of the Virginia convention to ratify the Constitution; in 1797 he was appointed an envoy to France; two years later he was a member of Congress from Virginia; during

the next year he was appointed Secretary of State; and in 1801 he became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Every moment of his time, it would seem, was occupied in public service; and, yet, during the first years of the nineteenth century he found time to write a most thorough *Life of Washington,* together with a large number of papers dealing with the Constitution. In all of this work, it must be noted, there is no sign of haste, no dashing off of a mere sentiment, but everywhere, no matter what the subject, the deep, exact thinking of a natural jurist. As Thomas Hart Benton has said, "a solid judgment, great reasoning power, acute and penetrating mind" were his, and even to this day his closely knitted logic and general firmness of tone are refreshingly virile. The very phraseology of his decisions has the character of an intellectual stimulus; we unconsciously begin to admire their author. His ideals were high. "The judicial department," he wrote, "comes home in its effects to every man's fireside; it passes on his property, his reputation, his life, his all. Is it not to the last degree important that he [the judge] should be rendered perfectly and completely independent, with nothing to influence or control him, but God, and his conscience? . . . I have always thought, from my earliest youth until now, that the greatest scourge an angry Heaven ever inflicted upon an ungrateful and sinning people was an ignorant, a corrupt, or a dependent judiciary."

In Marshall we indeed find one of the great culminations of the legal trend in the South; for back of him were nearly two hundred years of political discussion, statecraft, and study of law in its every phase; all about him in the environment of both his boyhood and his manhood was the one ever-present question: What is government?

XII

Mason Weems — (1760-1825)

No matter how serious and troubled the age, there is always some fellow whose very nature so bubbles over with frivolity that we gladly forgive his levity and look upon him as a most relieving contrast amidst the deeper and more staid folk. In the dispensation of Providence it so happened that the literature of the South during this period had its wearer of the cap and bells. His name was "Parson" Mason L. Weems, and he was a Virginian. He was educated in London for the ministry and did indeed, for a number of years, have charge of Pohick Church in Mount Vernon parish; but there are indications that he considered his talent "wasted on the desert air." At length, however, his health gave out; but not so his tongue. He turned book-agent! His success was immediate; for he was "equally ready for a stump, a fair, or a pulpit." In versatility he was indeed a surprise. As fiddler, preacher, politician, book-agent, and writer, he entertained both high and low, and when he published his books, everybody wanted to see what the "parson" had written.

What books he did write! He was not always certain of his facts, it is true; but, then, he could easily invent them when necessary. Imagination was one of his fortes, and his *Lives* of Washington, Franklin, Marion, and Penn are replete with incidents which, after we see them in these books, we are sorry *didn't* happen. His version of Washington and the hatchet is delicious, but, alas, the heartless historian has proved it a creature of Weems' imagination. But be it said to the author's credit, the mere fact of his making it seem so true that a whole nation rebels against giving it up, proves him a genius in the story-telling line. The

actual words of the little legend are rarely heard nowadays: "Presently George and his hatchet make their appearance. 'George,' said his father, 'do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden?' This was a *tough* question, and George staggered under it for a moment; but quickly recovered himself; and, looking at his father, with the sweet face of youth brightened with the inexpressible charm of all-conquering truth, he bravely cried out, 'I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie; I did cut it with my hatchet!'—'Run to my arms, you dearest boy,' said his father, in transports, 'run to my arms. Glad am I, George, that you ever killed my tree, for you have paid me for it a thousand-fold. Such an act of heroism in my son is more worth than a thousand trees, though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold!' "

"Parson" Weems could tell a story with such profound confidence and delightful vivacity that the reader of his day was ashamed to doubt. His style is dashing and always attractive, while at times there is a real eloquence in his work. In a more cultivated stage of American life he might have been lifted into a higher plane and might have become one of the greater writers of American Literature. As it is, he is simply—"Parson" Weems.

XIII

William Wirt — (1772-1834)

In William Wirt we find a man of undoubted literary talent. He was an honest lover of letters, and in his last years, when sorrow had fallen heavily upon him, he often exclaimed, "All, all is vanity and vexation of spirit, except religion, friendship, and literature." And, yet, he had viewed life through many

kinds of activities. He was a native of Maryland, having been born at Bladensburg in that State in 1772; but in his twenty-first year he removed to Virginia, and there began his career of usefulness and success. In 1801 he was made chancellor of Virginia, in 1816 United States district-attorney, and in 1817 United States attorney-general. As did many of his contemporaries, he made writing a recreation, and, as a result, we have a number of light and thoroughly well-written sketches. His most solid piece of work is his *Life of Patrick Henry,* a model biography in its sympathetic insight of the character discussed; but in his *Letters of the British Spy, Rainbow* (essays), and *Old Bachelor* (written with the aid of Dabney Carr, George Tucker, and others), we see the writer in a far more entertaining mood. The most widely read of these, *Letters of the British Spy,* consists of ten letters supposed to have been left at an American inn by a British spy, and gives an account of the great men of the day and ideas on things in general.

There are in Wirt's writing a luxuriance and an easiness not at all common in the literature of this period. There is no straining for stateliness and dignity, but, rather, in a face-to-face way he tells of the experiences through which he has passed or of which he has heard. Perhaps no better means of showing the connectedness, the gracefulness, and the thoroughly entertaining character of his manner can be devised than the giving of a simple illustration from *Letters of the British Spy.* He is describing the eloquent sermon of a blind preacher: "He then drew a picture of the sufferings of our Saviour; his trial before Pilate; his ascent up Calvary; his crucifixion, and his death. I knew the whole history; but never until then had I heard the circumstances so selected, so arranged, so colored! It was

all new; and I seemed to have heard it for the first time in my life. His enunciation was so deliberate, that his voice trembled on every syllable; and every heart in the assembly trembled in unison. His peculiar phrases had that force of description, that the original scene appeared to be at that moment acting before our eyes. We saw the very faces of the Jews; the staring, frightful distortions of malice and rage. We saw the buffet; my soul kindled with a flame of indignation; and my hands were involuntarily and convulsively clinched.

"But when he came to touch on the patience, the forgiving meekness of our Saviour; when he drew to the life his blessed eyes streaming in tears to heaven; his voice breathing to God a soft and gentle prayer of pardon on his enemies, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,'—the voice of the preacher, which had all along faltered, grew fainter and fainter, until, his utterance being entirely obstructed by the force of his feelings, he raised his handkerchief to his eyes, and burst into a loud and irrepressible flood of grief. The effect is inconceivable. The whole house resounded with the mingled groans and sobs and shrieks of the congregation.

"It was some time before the tumult had subsided, so far as to permit him to proceed. Indeed, judging by the usual, but fallacious standard of my own weakness, I began to be very uneasy for the situation of the preacher. For I could not conceive how he would be able to let his audience down from the height to which he had wound them, without impairing the solemnity and dignity of his subject, or perhaps shocking them by the abruptness of the fall. But—no: the descent was as beautiful and sublime as the elevation had been rapid and enthusiastic.

"The first sentence with which he broke the awful silence was a quotation from Rousseau: 'Socrates died like a philosopher, but Jesus Christ, like a God!' "

XIV

Others deserve perhaps some study in detail; but only the most notable may obtain it here. John Joachim Zubly of Georgia, who in 1769 wrote *An Humble Enquiry into the Nature of the Dependency of the American Colonies upon the Parliament of Great Britain and the Rights of Parliament to Lay Taxes on the Said Colonies,* is worthy of notice. He aided the colonists with tongue and pen up *to* the point of revolution; but he could go no further. At length he declared that man who strove to separate the two countries to be a criminal. "Let him be accursed by both," he wrote; and forthwith he became a supporter of the British. Another advocate of that side was Jonathan Boucher, an Englishman who came to America in 1759. Four years later he was ordained by the Bishop of London and until 1775 was a rector in Virginia and Maryland. In that year he was "outlawed" and compelled to return to England. For the man was frank, —too frank for his own good, and in his effort "to check the immense mischief that was impending," he was often in grave danger. "For more than six months," he declares, "I preached, when I did preach, with a pair of loaded pistols lying on the cushion; having given notice that if any one attempted to drag me out of the pulpit, I should think myself justified in repelling violence by violence." Upon returning to London, he published *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution,* a book which shows admirable sincerity and intellectual power, but, yet, is not

quite the book for an *American.* "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. The first father was the first king." In his eyes, therefore, the Revolution was clearly a crime.

Again, some mention should be made of DANIEL DULANY of Maryland, a graduate of Cambridge, whose *Consideration on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies* was so invincible in its arguments that Pitt took it into Parliament and held it up to the admiration of his colleagues. It is a noteworthy fact that from this day the great British statesman advocated a colonial policy following in almost every particular the principles laid down by Dulany. Then, also, two members of the Lee family served the new nation with their pen—ARTHUR LEE, a graduate of Edinburgh, who for the sake of the American cause, brought forth in England *The Monitor* (1768), *The Political Detection* (1770), and *An Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain;* and HENRY LEE, "Light-Horse Harry," whose funeral oration on Washington contains the memorable phrase, "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

These men are, of course, not among the great writers of the world. Only a few of them hold rank among the greatest writers in American Literature. As statesmen, as generals, many of them do possess great fame; but their path lay in the world of action and not in the world of letters. Yet, their effect on American Literature must not be lost sight of; for through them the writings of the New World gained a certain tone of patriotism, a self-pride, and a trend of thought observable even yet,—in short, a distinct idea of an American Literature for American readers. These early writers had been writing

so many years for Americans, and Americans had been reading the words of their own writers so long that, when less turbulent times came, all found American Literature to have become, unawares, an established fact.

XV.

It has been mentioned that this Revolutionary period was not an era of poetry. The grandest poetry of those dark days was written in blood on the snowy fields of Valley Forge. It was a time of noble lives, not of noble verses. Little time there was indeed for the delicately artistic; for men were struggling for mere freedom. But on every occasion of war, it is natural for songs to spring forth, embodying the emotions of the masses and arousing the fevered enthusiasm to an even higher pitch; and so it was at this time. They are not dainty little ditties, but rough, spirited ballads such as soldiers might roar forth around the evening camp-fire. They all possess something of the spirit of that one entitled *Independence* (1776), which contains this challenge:

> "Freeman! if you pant for glory,
> If you sigh to live in story,
> If you burn with patriot zeal,
> Seize this bright, auspicious hour;
> Chase those venal tools of power,
> Who subvert the public weal."

A very few rather noble songs were born in those days of battle and carnage; for instance, the manly *American Soldiers' Hymn* beginning:

> "'Tis God that girds our armor on,
> And all our just designs fulfills;
> Through Him our feet can swiftly run,
> And nimbly climb the steepest hills."

But few, if any, of this kind were written in the South; religious tendencies were not so deep-rooted in the section. Better known to these people was the Carolina song, *Battle of King's Mountain* (1781), with its jerky rhythm and air of bravado:

"'Twas on a pleasant mountain
The Tory heathens lay,—
With a doughty major at their head,
One Ferguson, they say.
Cornwallis had detached him,
A-thieving for to go,
And catch the Carolina men,
Or bring the rebels low."

In 1766 the repeal of the Stamp Act brought joy to many a well-wisher for England in Virginia and the Carolinas; for in those colonies the love for the mother country was strong, and revolution meant the breaking of very strong ties. But as time passed, the continued oppression cast a cloud of gloom over the South as well as the North, and there came from the Southern section, as a result, a somewhat rude but sincere lyric of war. It was called *Virginia Hearts of Oak,* modeled, of course, after Garrick's famous *Hearts of Oak* —and in its strong appeal to love of freedom and to patriotism, it was not without effect.

Revolutionary Songs

"Sure never was picture drawn more to the life,
Or affectionate husband more fond of his wife,
Than America copies and loves Britain's sons,
Who, conscious of freedom, are bold as great guns.

"Hearts of oak are we still,
For we're sons of those men
Who always are ready—
Steady, boys, steady—
To fight for their freedom again and again.
. . . . . .

"To King George, as true subjects, we loyal bow down,
But hope we may call Magna Charta our own:
Let the rest of the world slavish worship decree,
Great Britain has ordered her sons to be *Free.*
"Hearts of oak, etc.

"With Loyalty, Liberty let us entwine,
Our blood shall for both flow as free as our wine;
Let us set an example what all men should be,
And a toast give the world,—Here's to those who'd be *Free.*
"Hearts of oak, etc."

A number of specimens might be given. HEWLINGS, a Virginian, wrote in 1775 *The American Hearts of Oak;* REDNAP HOWELL, a North Carolina schoolmaster, composed several patriotic songs, the patriotism of which is their only redeeming feature; and one Virginia woman even went so far as to write a poem on tea—"pernicious, baleful Tea,"

"With all Pandora's ills possessed;
Hyson, no more beguiled by thee,
My noble sons shall be oppressed."

JAMES MCCLURG, a Virginia physician and a classmate of Jefferson's, wrote several Revolutionary songs and one very popular poem, *The Belles of Williamsburg* (1777). His best effort along the line of writing, however, was his prosaic *Essay on the Human Bile,* a work that was translated into many languages and highly praised by European scholars. Surely the truth was spoken of old when it was said, "Every man is eloquent in that which he understands."

XVI

Charles Henry Wharton — (1748-)

At least three Southern writers of verse in this period possessed talent. They were Charles Henry Wharton and Hugh Henry Brackenridge, both of Maryland, and St. George Tucker, of Virginia. There is some real poetry in Wharton's *Poetical Epistle to George Washington,* and, coming, as it did, just at the time when the great leader was fighting enemies both abroad and at home, it calls for a double share of admiration. Its author was born at Notley Hall, Maryland, in 1748, and, having gone to the Old Country at an early age, he attended the Jesuit college at St. Omers. When the Jesuits were driven from France, he followed the college to Bruges, and later studied at the Jesuit school at Leige, where he received priest's orders. In 1773 he became professor of Mathematics there, but soon gave up the position to serve his church in England. And there, as he watched the momentous struggle, he ever looked with admiration upon one figure—Washington; the true nobility of the calm leader thrilled him. Then it was, in 1778, that he wrote his *Epistle.* The poem was first published in America, but in 1780, it appeared in London under the special sanction of the Duchess of Devonshire, and, although it was expressly stated that the proceeds were to go to *American prisoners,* fifteen thousand copies were sold in three weeks. It was a remarkable evidence of the unpopularity of the war.

Perhaps the best words to use in describing the character of the poem are "strong" and "manly." There is no "gush" in it; only plain, precise praise and absolute confidence in Washington. At all times the predominant note is Virtue in Man and in

State. The final words, a eulogy on Washington, are worthy of more fame:

> "Great without pomp, without ambition brave,
> Proud not to conquer fellowmen, but save;
> Friend to the wretched, foe to none but those
> Who plan their greatness on their brethren's woes;
> Awed by no titles, faithless to no trust,
> Free without faction, obstinately just;
> Too rough for flattery, dreading e'en as death
> The baneful influence of corruption's breath;
> Warmed by Religion's sacred genuine ray
> That points to future bliss the unerring way;
> . . . . . .
> Such be my country:—what her sons should be,
> O, may they learn, great Washington, from thee!"

It was a bold, virile voice, heard when most needed, and today it stands as a strong testimonial to the purity, wholesomeness, and general influence of Washington's character. For contemporaries are generally blind to living genius, and just praise often comes only with the decay of the tombstone. But here, within three years after the hero had come into the notice of the world, while jealousy and deceit were everywhere busy, we find a fellow-countryman able to cast aside the misconceptions that so commonly gather about a living man, and showing him in the same beautiful light that all the succeeding years have so gladly shed about him.

XVII

Hugh Henry Brackenridge
(1748-1816)

Brackenridge was a writer of no mean merit, and in a less troublesome time, when there would have been more leisure for literature of the higher sort, the world might have heard from him. His versatility was equaled only by his immense energy and determination. He was a native of Scotland, and from early boyhood he showed the Scotchman's obstinate perseverance in overcoming the many

difficulties of his life. When the family came to America in 1753, they were so poor that the father had to sell his coat to get food and transportation part of the way to a backwoods settlement in York county, Pennsylvania. But the greater portion of the journey was made on foot.

The boy showed a yearning for knowledge and often walked thirty miles to obtain a book. Having obtained a knowledge of Latin and Greek from a clergyman, he, in turn, taught a friend those languages in exchange for lessons in mathematics, and thus he at length gained knowledge enough to become teacher of a country school. Some of his first work along this line was done at Gunpowder Falls, Maryland, where he is said to have settled the matter of discipline by thrashing a giant of a fellow with a burning club seized from the fire. After teaching for several years Brackenridge went to Princeton, and, it seems, worked his way through as a "general utility man." Among his classmates were Madison and Freneau. He graduated in 1771, taught in the college for a time, obtained license to preach, went back to Maryland, and became both teacher and clergyman. It was while engaged in such work that he became fired with enthusiasm over the bravery of the American soldiers and wrote for his pupils the drama, *Battle of Bunker Hill* (1776).

But the strain was too great for him to remain at the country academy; and, consequently, in the spring of 1777 his tall, commanding form appeared before Washington's headquarters. He possessed a great, full voice and was a natural orator; and when he preached his fiery "gunpowder" sermons, he roused the flagging spirit of many a weary patriot. That same year he published his second dramatic poem, entitled *The Death of General Montgomery,*

and in 1778 the best of his war sermons in *Six Political Discourses, Founded on the Scripture.* It may easily be surmised that these discourses have much the flavor of the Vindictive Psalms; for throughout the wild, fierce sentences rings the one revengeful cry, "Woe unto them!" "Let every class of men join to execrate the tyrant, and the tyranny, and to rank the George of England with the Cains and the murderers of mankind. Let fathers teach their sons the degenerate nature, and the name of Englishmen—let mothers still with this the children on the breast, and make the name a bugbear. . . . Let the aged father send his son to battle with cheerfulness and resignation. Let the wife permit her husband, and perplex him not with womanish exclamations, or with tears. . . . Let every man become a soldier. . . . Let him be of the mind to fight from hill to hill, from vale to vale, and on every plain, until the enemy is driven back, and forced to depart,—until the tyrant shall give up his claim, and be obliged to confess that free men, that Americans, are not to be subdued."

His two dramatic poems hold strictly to the classic ideas of time, place, and action, and compose good reading but poor acting—just as their author intended, it may be added. His object was not to write works of great histrionic possibilities, but simply to inspire Americans with greater confidence by showing them their true fighting ability, by impressing the thought that he who battles in a good cause is doubly armed, and by putting the true nobility of that cause in a clearer light. And though much of these two poems is bombastic and unnatural, some parts seem to be the results of honest emotion and therefore impress us with their worth. Thus, when the brave Warren receives his death wound, he falls upon his knees and utters these last words:

"By the last parting breath
And blood of this your fellow soldier slain,
Be now adjured never to yield the right,—
The grand deposit of all giving Heaven
To man's free nature, that he rules himself!

. . . . . .

Weep not for him who first espoused the cause,
And risking life, hath met the enemy
In fatal opposition—but rejoice:
For now I go to mingle with the dead,—
Great Brutus, Hampden, Sidney, and the rest,
Of old or modern memory, who lived
A mound to tyrants, and strong hedge to kings,
Bounding the inundation of their rage
Against the happiness and peace of Man.

. . . . . .

I see these heroes where they walk serene,
By crystal currents, on the vale of Heaven,
High in full converse of immortal acts
Achieved for truth and innocence on earth.

. . . . . .

Illustrious group! They beckon me along,
To ray my visage with immortal light,
And bind the amaranth around my brow.
I come, I come, ye first-born of true fame.
Fight on, my countrymen, be free, be free."

In *The Death of General Montgomery* Brackenridge strives to arouse intense hatred toward the British. He spares no words in portraying them as selfish, cruel, and beastly in nature; they are, as he sees them, the acme of all that is bad. The closing words of the poem can give some idea of the spirit:

"Sad thought of cruelty and outrage dire:
Not to be paralleled 'mongst human kind,
Save in the tales of flesh-devouring men,
The one-eyed Cyclops and fierce Cannibal.
For what we hear of Saracen or Turk,
Mogul or Tartar of Siberia,
Is far behind the deed of infamy
And horror mixed which Britons meditate.

. . . . . .

And at the Last Day, when the Pit receives
Her gloomy brood, and seen among the rest,
Some spirit distinguished by ampler swell
Of malice, envy, and soul-griping hate,
Pointing to him, the foul and ugly ghosts
Of hell shall say—'That was an Englishman.'"

It may be surprising to learn that the man who could write in this strain afterwards made up a long, rambling, humorous story about a red-headed Irishman. In the course of time Brackenridge went to Pennsylvania, founded the *United States Magazine,* studied law, and became judge of the Supreme Court of that State. It was in 1796 that he published the first part of *Modern Chivalry; or the Adventures of Captain Farrago and Teague O'Regan, His Servant.* And after the American world had had a ten-years' laugh over it, he brought out a second part. The book is an extravagant satire, warning its readers against too much democracy. The hero, Teague O'Regan, gets all kinds of political offices, not because of any extraordinary ability or training, but simply because he is popular with the masses. However, this very dependence on the fickle favor of the crowd at length proves the demagogue's destruction; for when he is appointed excise-man, they tar and feather the poor Irishman, giving him "the appearance of a wild fowl of the forest."

In this preacher, teacher, soldier, lawyer, politician, judge, poet, and humorist, we have one of the first of the writers of the new America to write with some ambition toward high excellence of diction. He was often wrapped up in a cause—his dramas show this—but at the same time he strove to express himself artistically and to do more than simply speak the idea. Perhaps, in another period, no great movement might have aroused him; but in a less stormy era his undoubted ability might have brought forth a higher product of literature.

XVIII

St. George Tucker — (1752-1828)

The last of the three poets, St. George Tucker, was born in the Bermudas, but early removed to Virginia. He studied law, became a most brilliant jurist, and was chosen professor of Law at William and Mary College. His life was a singularly busy and noble one; while his broad and kind nature, so well shown in his treatment of his step-son, John Randolph, attracted all who met him. He possessed literary taste of a high order, and his efforts in verse show it; for although, according to absolute standards, he wrote nothing great, there are always in his work a gracefulness and a purity of sentiment, delightful to this day. His writings compose no small quantity, among them being *Fugitive Stanzas, Probationary Odes of Jonathan Pindar, Esq., Commentary on the Constitution, Dissertation on Slavery,* and some unpublished dramas. By far the best known of his efforts is *Resignation, or Days of My Youth:*

"Days of my youth,
Ye have glided away;
Hairs of my youth,
Ye are frosted and gray;
Eyes of my youth,
Your keen sight is no more;
Cheeks of my youth,
Ye are furrowed all o'er;
Strength of my youth,
All your vigor is gone;
Thoughts of my youth,
Your gay visions are flown.

. . .

"Days of my age,
Ye will shortly be past;
Pains of my age,
Yet awhile ye can last;

Joys of my age,
In true wisdom delight;
Eyes of my age,
Be religion your light;
Thoughts of my age,
Dread ye not the cold sod;
Hopes of my age,
Be ye fixed on your God."

With these lines we may close the Revolutionary period of Southern Literature. It is a significant epoch in many ways; not in its literary productions; for, excepting the *Declaration of Independence* and *The Federalist,* they were not world-famous ones; but in its awakening power, its thorough arousing of the intellectual and moral nature of the people, and its persistent calling upon its writers for aid in the great struggle. With the beginning of the nineteenth century there had come what America, and especially the South, had not known before—a public hungering for reading matter. True, the hunger was too frequently satisfied by the newspaper; but, at the same time, the great majority of American citizens had become more or less persistent readers. The Revolution unconsciously brought, with its *political* freedom, an *intellectual* freedom as well.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF EXPANSION

(1810-1850)

It has long been the mistaken sentiment among the romantically inclined that materialism and literature were, are, and ever more shall be mortal enemies,—that commercialism, national accumulation of wealth, and the spirit of intense productive activity sound the death-note of nobility in letters. The woeful prophecy has ever been: Where Dives feasts, Literature famishes. How mistaken the idea! The history of every nation proves the fallacy of the argument. Chaucer came when England was in the midst of a great commercial awakening; Shakespeare lived in an age when the wealth of the world was pouring into Great Britain; Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning began their wonderful work when discoveries in science and inventions of machinery were laughing to scorn the old conceptions of wealth.

Such indeed, in a smaller way, was the literary history of the South in the period now before us. With the settlement of the Revolution there came a great confidence into the soul of every American, and for decade after decade a marvelous march of progress went on in America. The treasures of the mine were revealed; the forests of the mountain became the forests of the sea; grain and tobacco became gold in foreign ports; and the only need in all the land was the need of more laborers. And the

South, sharing to some degree in this general, national movement, underwent a special transformation of its own. Strange as the fact may seem today, *cotton* was unknown as a staple crop until near the close of the eighteenth century. The farmer in the back country devoted his time to the raising of wheat, corn, hemp, and tobacco, and left the growing of the small amount of cotton to those planters whose wealth allowed such luxurious use of soil and labor. Because of the great difficulty of separating the lint from the seed and otherwise preparing the product for market, the raising of cotton inclined somewhat toward our modern idea of "fancy gardening." But in 1793 a great change occurred, and, now, let the over-romantic note it; for through it nearly all that is worthy in Southern Literature gained existence. In that year Eli Whitney invented the cotton-gin, and the whole economic system of the South was revolutionized. Planters rapidly moved into the interior, carrying their slaves with them, and there, in the Piedmont region beyond the pine barrens, established a new but modified Virginia. Many, giving up the culture of tobacco, drifted to the Southeast and cleared away the wilderness of Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana.

What were the sociological results of this far-reaching movement? The early settlers of this interior region had established a rough backwoods civilization, primitive indeed, but exceedingly effective for such conditions; and into this strange community came the Cavalier type of Eastern planters. The characters of both were affected, and the direct result was the development of that positive, aggressive, and reckless society which we shall find described so often in the literature of this period. Virginia began, also, to lose much of her old-time prestige; creative energy passed into the lower

South; and political domination transferred itself largely to the Cotton Belt. In 1811 a new group of men from the South entered the halls of Congress and new names were on every one's lips,—the names of Calhoun, Cheves, and Lowndes of South Carolina, Crawford and Troup of Georgia, and Henry Clay of Kentucky. The South no longer consisted merely of Virginia and the Carolinas.

Is not Literature the voice of History? What the one utters must come from the living soul of the other. Therefore, we shall find no more that the only literary efforts of the South are coming from the narrow coast section; but, far to the contrary, we shall hear expressions of thought and emotion from the Potomac to the Gulf, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. It is doubtful even whether the best in poetry is in this period to come from the Old Dominion, and it is certain that the best in oratory and in fiction shall not.

The first white people of this interior country may have been rough; but wealth and culture came to them quickly. Private schools—poor indeed, yet heralds of better things—sprang up among them, and at length among the land-owning classes ignorance became a disgrace. These schools were, of a truth, strange institutions. Judge Longstreet has given us a picture of a typical one, something as follows: The houses were little log huts, with chimneys built of sticks chinked with mud. The whole formed a street shaded by majestic oaks and composed entirely of log huts varying in size from six to sixteen feet square. The street was about forty yards wide and the houses ten or twelve, ranged on the sides, either built by the students themselves or rented by them. The common price was five dollars for a house "on front row," water-proof and easily chinked. In the suburbs were several

other buildings of the same kind erected by literary recluses who could not endure the din of the city at play-time. At the head of the street stood the academy, differing in nothing from the other buildings but in size and the number of its rooms. There were two rooms, one for the primary pupils, while the larger was the recitation room of Dr. Waddell himself, the prayer-room, court-room, and general convocation-room for all matters concerning the school. It was without seats and just large enough to contain one hundred and fifty boys standing erect, close-pressed, and leave a circle of six by ten at the door for jigs and cotillions at the teacher's regular service every Monday.

In connection with the above picture may be placed the description given by the Southern historian, Dr. Ramsay. Here, he says, in this sylvan retreat gathered students from all parts of this State and the adjoining ones, and the wild woods of the Savannah resounded with the echoes of Homer and Virgil, Cicero and Horace. Under the wide-spreading branches in summer and in their huts in winter, the students diligently studied, changing their occupations at the sound of the horn, and repairing to the house for recitation when called for by the name of "the Virgil class," "the Homer class," or "the Euclid class." In a moment they appeared before their preceptor, and with order and decorum recited their lessons, were critically examined in grammar and syntax, the construction of sentences, the formation of verbs, the antiquities of Greece and of Rome, the history and geography of the Ancients, illustrative of the author whose works they recite, and were taught to relish his beauties and enter into his spirit. Thus class succeeded class without the formality of definite hours.

It was a strange form of education,—one which the more enlightened pedagogy of later days might utterly condemn; and yet from this unparalleled mingling of classicism and wildest nature there resulted many of the greatest statesmen and not a few of the greatest leaders in modern history. America has ever condensed a century of the world's growth into a decade of her own, and this is but another instance of the fact.

As yet the still prevailing ambition was statecraft. To be an orator and a law-maker was the goal of almost every young man's ambition. Well might the whole South echo the sentiment of Alexis de Tocqueville when he wrote: "I can conceive nothing more admirable or more powerful than a great orator debating great questions of state in a democratic assembly. . . . As precedents have there but little weight,—as there are no longer any privileges attached to certain property, nor any rights inherent in certain individuals,—the mind must have recourse to general truths derived from human nature to resolve the particular question under discussion. Hence the political debates of a democratic people, however small it may be, have a degree of breadth which frequently renders them attractive to mankind. All men are interested by them, because they treat of *man,* who is everywhere the same." This, moreover, was the period when the question arose whether under the form of a republican government man could hold his fellow-man in bondage, and, though small and seemingly without danger in the early part of the era, the fire of passion had been fanned by the close of the period into an all-consuming flame. There was, indeed, need of statesmen, and those of the highest rank.

Yet, amid such conditions we see the first vigorous signs of pure literature. Essays on literary and

art subjects became more frequent; poetry of no mean order was written; and, for the first time in the history of Southern Literature, fiction showed important developments. Again, a most hopeful sign was the effort to found literary magazines. Between the years 1811 and 1860 we find *Niles' Register* in Baltimore; *The Southern Review, The Southern Literary Quarterly, The Southern Quarterly, The Southern and Western Magazine,* and *Russell's Magazine* in Charleston, *DeBow's Review* in New Orleans, and *The Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond. Every newspaper, too, had its "Poets' Corner" and some of the gems of Southern verse were given to the public through this source.

It was, in fact, a most sanguine time for literature, not only in the South, but in the North as well. Abroad Wordsworth was declaring a new reverence for Nature; Shelley was dreaming of wider liberty; and Byron was showing the genius of his fiery soul. By the beginning of the period Irving had become the leader of the New York school of writers; in 1837 Emerson had delivered his marvelous address, *The American Scholar,* and by the close of the period Hawthorne, Cooper, Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, and a host of others were known to the world. The South had few names to compare with these; but it *did* have a number of writers who, with their minor genius, were sincerely characteristic of their section in sentiment, passion, and tradition.

We shall find, then, in the Southern Literature of this period the same eloquence that has always characterized the statesman from these States; an outburst of song, real, lyric song, not deep, not didactic, but indeed lyrical; a similar outburst of fiction; and, what should be considered as most natural—for before the war the South was a land

of fun-lovers—the coming of the humorist. It was the beginning of a possible great literature,—a literature, however, that, under the weight of the long-continued sectional controversy and civil war that followed, was crushed into a very different form.

Orators, Essayists, and Historians.

I

In the ante-bellum days of Southern history every leader was expected and almost compelled to be a public speaker. The county court-house resounded not infrequently with bombastic harangues, but more often with eloquence of a very high order. Every cross-road had its debating club, while in many of the so-called colleges the students learned more of permanent value through their preparation for the "literary society" than in all the class-work put together. It was but natural that the Southern statesman of the day should, through his power of publicly expressing thought, gain the admiration of all Americans. This phase of Southern Literature, so characteristic of the section, we shall examine first.

Passing over a small host of such legislators and political leaders as William Pinkney (1764-1822), who zealously strove to prove that slavery and a republican form of government are not incongruous; Robert Walsh (1784-1859), who wrote some well-worded essays; Sam Houston (1793-1863), the father of Texas; and William Campbell Preston (1794-1860), the statesman and educator, we come to that group of master-minds whose importance is not sectional but national. A truly wonderful list of names is this—John Randolph (1773-1833), Henry Clay (1777-1852),

John C. Calhoun (1782-1850), Thomas Hart Benton (1782-1858), and Robert Young Hayne (1791-1839).

John Randolph — (1773-1833)

Randolph, a descendant of Pocahontas, as he often boasted, was born at Cawsons, Virginia. Under the care of his stepfather, St. George Tucker, he was trained so kindly yet so thoroughly that throughout his entire life he held in grateful memory the name of this foster-parent. Having been a student at William and Mary, Princeton, and Columbia, he received the best in scholastic education that America could offer; and, yet, he was never quite prepared for life. In temperament he was often bitter and intolerant. He was radical in religion and politics, was doubtful of all forms of government and put his trust in no power. Opposed to the Constitution, he could not bear to hear Washington take the oath of office. His eccentricities, startling even to his most intimate friends, became in his last years so prominent that his sanity was doubted, and in a contest over his will the court actually declared him insane.

Be that as it may, the thirty years of his congressional life constituted a period of memorable service to his country. He was a sturdy friend of justice and boldly spoke out against prejudice toward either individual or nation, even toward the old enemy, England. "With chiefs of banditti, negro or mulatto, we can treat and trade. Name, however, but England and all our antipathies are up in arms against her. Against whom? Against those whose blood runs in our veins; in common with whom we claim Shakespeare, and Newton, and Chatham, for our countrymen; whose form of government is the freest on earth, our own only excepted; from whom

every valuable principle of our own institutions has been borrowed. . . . I acknowledge the influence of a Shakespeare and a Milton upon my imagination, of a Locke upon my understanding, of a Sidney upon my political principles, of a Chatham upon qualities which, would to God I possessed in common with that illustrious man; of a Tillotson, a Sherlock, and a Porteus upon my religion. This is a British influence which I can never shake off."

Although thus a broad man in many ways, he lacked the essential calmness of a great statesman. He was "an unparalleled master of invective," and with his reckless sarcasm, his eloquence, sometimes bombastic, but oftener accurate and telling, and his almost ungovernable temper, he was a power to be reckoned with. He denounced Jefferson and Madison, introduced the resolution for the impeachment of Justice Samuel Chase, and fought a duel with Clay. He was tall and thin, and when he arose in the halls of Congress and shook his long, skinny finger at his opponents and lifted his shrill, piping voice in bitter taunts, he became a terror to his enemies. And his enemies were not few. His language, "as direct as the arrow from the Indian bow," spoke its meaning in unmistakable terms; and, naturally, bitter animosity was the inevitable result. His style was clear, rapid, original, like the man, and it never dodged the question. This absolute fearlessness is best shown in his stand on the subject of slavery. Representing a slave State, and a slave-owner himself, he hated the institution with all his heart; and when the Territory of Indiana presented a memorial begging that slavery be permitted in that section, he opposed the movement with startling vehemence. At his death he freed his own slaves and provided for the maintenance of each one. Well has he been called "a singular mixture of the aristocrat and the Jacobin."

Yet, this strange man was undoubtedly sincere. Read but a few pages of his *Letters to a Young Relative* (1834), and such a belief is forced upon the mind. Are not the following words revelations of an earnest, simple-hearted man?

"This independence is but a name. Place us where you will—along with our rights there must coexist correlative duties; and the more exalted the station the more arduous are these last. Indeed, as the duty is precisely correspondent to the power, it follows that the richer, the wiser, the more powerful a man is, the greater is the obligation upon him to employ his gifts in lessening the sum of human misery; and this employment constitutes happiness which the weak and wicked vainly imagine to consist in wealth, finery, or sensual gratification."

John Randolph of Roanoke—the name will ever remain as the synonym of eccentricity, bitterness, passion, and sincerity.

II

Henry Clay
—
(1777-1852)

Once in many years there comes to men a leader so great, so pure in his very nature as to emerge wholly from the scurrilous intrigues of party and faction and stand as a patriot of the highest order. Such a man among the ancients was Cicero, among the mediævals Peter the Great, among the moderns Washington. To such an order, also, belongs "the great Pacificator," Henry Clay. He was not the profoundest statesman in the history of America, but he was by far the most popular, the most influential, and the most disinterested of his day. His real love for the nation *as a whole*—a feeling too infrequent among Southern statesmen of that time—cannot be doubted. "I know no

North, no South, no East, no West" was one of the most whole-souled utterances of that bitter period, and especially so, since Clay knew that through such an expression his popularity gained nothing in the section which he represented.

And yet this man was of the South and an ardent lover of it. He was born in Hanover county near Richmond, Virginia. His father, a Baptist minister, having died when Henry was but four years old, the boy spent much of his childhood in poverty. But his mother at length married again, and his step-father secured for him a clerkship in the High Court of Chancery, in which position his work was of such high excellence that he was advised to study law. He was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty, and, following the westward movement, went to Lexington, Kentucky, to practise. Almost immediate success was his, and by the year 1800 he was recognized as one of the foremost lawyers in the State. In 1799 he took an active part in the revision of the State Constitution, daring upon that occasion to advocate the gradual abolition of slavery. Seven years later, while filling an unexpired term in the United States Senate, he gave that body a foretaste of the wonderful eloquence, the tact, and the earnest sincerity which were in time to make the nation turn to him for guidance.

Immediately after the close of this term he became speaker of the Kentucky legislature. His resolution then introduced, advocating that no member should wear foreign-made clothing, was branded by Humphrey Marshall as demagogy; and a duel followed. In 1809 he again went to the United States Senate; three years later, in the United States Congress, he forced the war of 1812, thus gaining for himself the name of "War Hawk," and at the close of the conflict he was sent to Ghent to arrange a treaty, and

there showed himself a greater diplomat than any other official present. In 1824 he was a candidate for the Presidency; but upon the election of Adams he became Secretary of State—an occurrence which John Randolph called "a coalition of the Puritan and the blackleg." Another duel followed. In 1844 he was again the Whig candidate for the Presidency, was again defeated, and returned to that place where he was so greatly needed—the Senate.

During all those years he labored for one great object, and that was *peace at home*. As the author of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, the Tariff Compromise of 1832, the Bill for Protection and Internal Improvement, and the Missouri Compromise of 1850, he strove zealously but vainly to thrust back the inevitable conflict. In that mighty effort personal interests became secondary, and daily, hourly, his deeds upheld the meaning of those memorable words: "I would rather be right than be President." And yet, as his eyes closed in death in 1852, they perhaps had never beheld before a period so troubled, so lacking in hope for a peaceful future.

As a creator of oratorical literature Henry Clay may well stand among the greatest in the English language. A magnetism and a sincerity were his that quickly mastered an audience and gave him power to sway his listeners as he wished. "In him intellect, person, reason, eloquence, and courage united to form a character fit to command. He fired with his own enthusiasm and controlled by his amazing will, individuals and masses." Perhaps his best efforts are the *Speech on the Greek Revolution* (1824) and the *Defense of the American System* (1832); but the high qualities which pervade these two are found so richly in many others of his addresses, that personal taste must enter somewhat into the selection of his masterpieces. In all of them

there is no appeal to prejudice; there is proof for every statement. "His style of argument," John P. McGuire has said, "was by vivid picture, apt comparison, and forcible illustration, rather than by close reasoning like Webster's, or impregnable logic like that of Calhoun."

Beyond all the brilliancy, fire, and righteousness of his character was his inborn love of harmony. "If there be any who want civil war, who want to see the blood of any portion of our countrymen spilt, I am not one of them. I wish to see war of no kind; but above all I do not desire to see a civil war. When war begins, whether civil or foreign, no human sight is competent to foresee when, or how, or where it is to terminate. But when a civil war shall be lighted up in the bosom of our own happy land, and armies are marching, and commanders are winning their victories, and fleets are in motion on our coast, tell me, if you can, tell me, if any human being can tell, its duration. God alone knows where such a war would end. In what a state will our institutions be left! In what a state our liberties! I want no war; above all, no war at home." Of such a nature was this patriot-orator. At times, when greatly aroused by the question under consideration, he forgot that cautiousness so necessary in a great leader; but, as a whole, considering the times and the environment, he displayed a marvelous reserve. Moreover, it can hardly be denied that by means of his eloquent pleading, one of the bloodiest conflicts in all history was stayed for two decades. Justly indeed might he claim that his was "the ambition of being the humble instrument in the hands of Providence to reconcile a divided people; once more to revive concord and harmony in a distracted land—the pleasing ambition of contemplating the glorious spectacle of a free, united, prosperous, and fraternal people."

III

Those were wonderful days in our nation's history, wonderful alike in their events and in their men. Edward Everett partly voiced the sentiment when he said, "Calhoun, Clay, Webster! I name them in alphabetical order. What other precedence can be assigned them? Clay the great leader, Webster the great orator, Calhoun the great thinker."

John Caldwell Calhoun — (1782-1850)

Calhoun was born of Scotch-Irish parentage in Abbeville county, South Carolina. His father was a man of very limited means, and consequently the boy had poor opportunities for gaining an education. Not until he was eighteen did he begin systematic study; but at that age he was so zealously and accurately instructed by his brother-in-law, the famous Moses Waddell, that at the age of twenty he was able to enter the Junior class at Yale, and to graduate with high honors two years later (1804). For a time he studied law at Charleston, and in 1807 began to practise the profession at Abbeville. He soon entered the State legislature; in 1811 he became a member of Congress; and thenceforth he was ever in the midst of the great struggles of the political arena.

In his earlier days he took sides with Clay and seemed very much in favor of *increased national power*—the very opposite of his later views. He went so far as even to favor a national bank, internal improvements under the charge of the national government, a protective tariff, and an enlarged navy. His ability, especially in logical analysis of the subject under discussion, kept him prominently before the public eye; and positions of responsibility became his with little or no opposition. Under Monroe he became Secretary of War. It was while in this

office that he drew up two of the most famous government reports ever constructed by an American: the one on roads and canals; the other on Indian affairs. In 1824 he became Vice-President and again in 1826; and in both elections there was but little opposition.

Now began the radical changes in the man. In that year, 1826, was passed the act popularly known as the "Tariff of Abominations"—a law which seemingly meant disaster to agricultural South Carolina. Then it was that Calhoun, turning aside from his former views, expressed himself unmistakably in favor of State sovereignty, in a widely read paper, the *South Carolina Exposition.* At this point the first quarrel with President Jackson occurred—the subject of dispute being the latter's conduct in the Seminole War. The breach between the two men widened, and Calhoun, seeing but little hope of reconciliation, cast aside all reserve, and wrote another paper (1831), calling upon the States to nullify any law that they might consider unconstitutional. During the next year the South Carolina legislature nullified the tariff act, and Calhoun resigned the Vice-Presidency to succeed as Senator Robert Y. Hayne, who had just been elected governor of South Carolina. It seemed indeed as though war were at hand. But by a compromise, which was really a victory for South Carolina, the matter was settled.

The hatred between Calhoun and Jackson grew more bitter. Calhoun, with his relentless logic and analytical expositions, constantly brought the hasty President's methods under criticism. But with a true love for the Union, he strove to crush all discussion of the unsleeping monster, Slavery, and, year after year, struggled to uphold State independence and yet thrust back the ever-advancing war. In

1843 he refused another term as Senator, became Secretary of War under Tyler, but in 1845 was back on the floor of the Senate. His presence was indeed needed there. The question of slavery was raging; the abolition movement in the North was advancing with great strides. In 1847, as a means of retaliation, he proposed a convention of the Southern States to prevent Northern commerce in the South; in 1849, seeing no hope for a peaceful Union, he proposed a convention for the purpose of "dissolving the partnership"!

Then came the famous Compromise of 1850. He wrote a speech upon the subject, but was too weak to read it before his fellow-senators. The worn gladiator was approaching death. But, filled with the spirit of the struggle unto the last, he wrote in his dying days two of the most remarkable political documents ever created: the *Disquisition on Government* and the *Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States.* He died at Washington March 31, 1850.

Great as Calhoun was in character and works, one would not turn to his writings for inspiration. As a speaker he was a power; but his strength was intellectual and not emotional. His ability in logical analysis has been mentioned; the man was logic incarnate. He built about his subject a bulwark of propositions and conclusions almost impregnable. Daniel Webster said of his eloquence: "It was plain, strong, terse, condensed, concise, sometimes impassioned, still always severe. Rejecting ornament, not often seeking far for illustration, his power consisted in the plainness of his propositions, in the closeness of his logic, and in the earnestness and energy of his manner." That he could use beautiful illustrations may be seen in this one extract from a speech delivered in his earlier days (1816):

"This country is now in a situation similar to that which one of the most beautiful writers of antiquity ascribes to Hercules in his youth. He represents the hero as retiring into the wilderness to deliberate on the course of life which he ought to choose. Two goddesses approach him; one recommending a life of ease and pleasure; the other, of labor and virtue. The hero adopts the counsel of the latter, and his fame and glory are known to the world. May this country, the youthful Hercules, possessing his form and muscles, be animated by similar sentiments, and follow his example!"

But such expressions are rare. In their cool, passionless analysis, his speeches may have struck home in *his* day; but *now,* on the printed page, they fail to arouse. His was not a rich imagination; he lacked the ability to surprise by a flash; he fails to inspire readers of today. But if you seek a calm creator of subtle, almost indestructible theories, read Calhoun. Notice these lines from his letter to Governor Hamilton of South Carolina (1832):

"There is *no direct* and *immediate* connection between the individual citizens of a State and the general government. The relation between them is through the State. The Union is a union of States as communities, and not a union of individuals. As members of a State, her citizens were originally subject to no control but that of the State, and could be subject to no other, except by the act of the State itself. The Constitution was accordingly submitted to the States for their separate ratification; and it was only by the ratification of the State that its citizens became subject to the control of the general government. . . . Whether subject to its control or not, depended wholly on the act of the State. . . . It follows, as a necessary consequence, that the act of ratification bound the State as a com-

munity, . . . and not the citizens of the State as individuals; the latter being bound through their State, and in consequence of the ratification of the former."

We have called this man a lover of the Union. So he was. His idea of nullification was not the same as secession. Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the Southern Confederacy felt impelled to break away from the doctrines of Calhoun in order to proceed in their radical movements. He was for a Union, with diminished power, acting simply as the agent of the separate States.

Cool, passionless reasoner though he was, he had little opportunity in his day to do anything but negative, destructive work. The times did not permit the positive and constructive. His days were spent in defensive argument, in pointing out what he considered the wrongs of present-day government. But in the last days that wonderful mind turned its searching view directly upon the foundations and developments of law, and then came the ever-famous *Disquisition on Government* and the *Discourses on the Constitution and Government of the United States.* Dr. W. P. Trent has well said: "In the course of his strenuous labors to divert the ruin he saw impending, he gave to the world the most masterly analyses of the rights of the minority and of the best methods of securing them that has yet come from the pen of a publicist."

IV

Thomas Hart Benton — (1782-1858)

Near the middle of the nineteenth century a familiar phrase on every voter's lips was "Old Bullion." It was the nickname of one of the most prominent and energetic figures then on the floor of the United States Senate—THOMAS HART BENTON of Missouri. During the Jacksonian era there was most bitter opposition to a United States bank, and Benton, the eloquent leader of this opposition, declared that gold and silver alone should constitute a currency; hence the title. It was a name greatly loved by Southern and Western people, a synonym for energy, perseverance, and uprightness, and with it all, a persuasive eloquence to be compared only to that of his contemporaries, Clay, Webster, Randolph, and Hayne.

The story of Benton's life is one applicable, with a very few changes, to the life of many an American leader: poverty in childhood, struggles in youth, honor in maturity, and undying memory in death. He was born near Hillsborough, North Carolina; but his mother took him, after the father's death, to Tennessee. He attended the University of North Carolina for a time, but lack of means prevented his finishing the course. In Tennessee his family made a settlement near Nashville, at a place known afterwards as Bentontown, and there for some years he led the usual life of rough toil and hardship incident to frontier existence. In early manhood he studied law under the guidance of St. George Tucker, and began to practise in Nashville. The year 1811 saw him in the State legislature, advocating a reform in the judicial system and advocating, also, the giving to slaves the right of trial by jury. The next year

he was a lieutenant-colonel in the second war with England. About this time, too, he met Jackson, and the two men began a friendship which terminated most abruptly in 1813, but which was renewed in after years. After the secession agitation of the Hartford Convention Benton became a pronounced Union man, and henceforth he combated with characteristic energy all that hinted of division of the nation—a form of activity which did not at all increase the number of his friends in the South.

In 1815 he removed to St. Louis. There he at once came into prominence through his interest in political affairs and through his newspaper, *The Missouri Inquirer;* for as an editor the man spoke his mind frankly, and of course, according to the code of honor in that day, was compelled to defend his assertions by means of duels. He strove for the admission of Missouri as a slave State, and after the Compromise of 1820 held the position of United States senator from that community for thirty years. No inducement of self or party advancement could at any time influence him in his efforts for the welfare of the nation. Time after time he endeavored to obtain a constitutional amendment allowing the people to vote directly for the President; he strove for fairness in the allotment of land to home-seekers; he opposed with all his power what he considered an effort to put the national currency on a deceitful basis.

The man who wished to cope with Benton's contemporaries was indeed in need of all the force, confidence, firmness, and stubborn perseverance of a real statesman; and such, in fact, were the qualities of this man. Fluent and vigorous at all times, he never failed to make a telling speech. He had the gift of exposition, and this, with his caustic wit and his habit of hammering at one point until gained,

made him a power in all movements that he considered just. But Benton deserves attention here as something more than an orator; he was a decidedly interesting writer. His most important works are his *Thirty Years' View of the Workings of Our Government, Abridgment of the Debates of Congress,* and *An Examination of the Dred Scott Case.* Here, again, we find the same force and vigor that characterized him as an orator, while, added to these traits, are the ease and readiness of a writer thoroughly interested in his subject. And he was indeed interested in these matters. At the age of seventy-six he was laboring on the *Abridgment of the Debates,* and having toiled until he had brought the fifteen volumes down to the great Compromise Debate of 1850 when Clay, Calhoun, Webster, and he himself were among the moving powers, he dictated the last pages in whispers forced from his dying body.

Perhaps his *Thirty Years' View* is the most interesting of his productions; for in its "succession of historical tableaux" there is a wealth of personal, novel description. We are surprised to see how rapidly ideas change, and how the customs common to the nation of one century are odd and even ridiculous to the nation of the next century. Note, for instance, a few extracts from the description of the duel between Clay and Randolph:

"I withdrew a little way into the woods, and kept my eyes fixed on Mr. Randolph, who I then knew to be the only one in danger. I saw him receive the fire of Mr. Clay, saw the gravel knocked up in the same place, saw Mr. Randolph raise his pistol—discharge it in the air; heard him say, 'I do not fire at you, Mr. Clay,' and immediately advancing and offering his hand. He was met in the same spirit. They met half-way, shook hands, Mr. Randolph saying jocosely, 'You owe me a coat, Mr. Clay'—

(the bullet had passed through the skirt of the coat very near the hip)—to which Mr. Clay promptly and happily replied, 'I am glad the debt is no greater.' . . . On Monday the parties exchanged cards, and social relations were formally and courteously restored. It was about the last high-toned duel that I have witnessed, and among the highest toned that I have ever witnessed. . . . Certainly duelling is bad, and has been put down, but not quite so bad as its substitute—revolvers, bowie knives, blackguarding, and street-assassination under the pretext of self-defense."

Such was the code of honor among ante-bellum leaders, not the least of whom was "Old Bullion" Benton.

V

The famous Webster-Hayne debate of January, 1830, will ever be a stirring chapter in American history. The extremely different views of the two master-minds, the intense earnestness of each, the thought, the logic, and the eloquence of both, the aroused nation, the time, the question, the steadily approaching crisis, all these move the soul of the thoughtful reader of today as they did the thinkers of that momentous period. The two orators were eminently representative of their respective sections: Webster the product of the more logical North; Hayne the product of the more emotional South; and neither lacked the power of a true orator.

Robert Young Hayne — (1791-1839)

Robert Young Hayne was an epitome of extremely Southern characteristics. He was born near St. Paul's Parish, Colleton District, South Carolina, and was educated at Charleston, where he also studied law. In the War of 1812 he served as an officer; from 1814 to 1818 he was a member of the State legislature; and during Monroe's

administration he served as Attorney-General of the United States. He entered the Senate in 1823, and there his remarkable power as a persuasive leader of men asserted itself with astonishing results. As a strict constructionist of the Constitution, a free-trader, and a states'-rights advocate, he had at the very first a large following, and this, by sheer force of his fiery genius, he constantly increased. He denounced the anti-slavery program of the Panama Congress, maintained that slavery was a domestic institution and therefore was exempt from Federal interference, and in the historic debates with Webster, lasting from January 19 to January 27, put forward most brilliant arguments to show that the Federal Government was but a compact between various independent States and therefore could be dissolved whenever any State considered the terms of agreement abused.

From 1832 to 1834 he was governor of South Carolina, and the choice was for a very good reason, we may well believe. For South Carolina had bitterly denounced the action of the government, and Hayne, as chairman of the committee appointed by the Charleston Nullification Convention of November 19, 1832, had reported the rousing *Ordinance of Nullification;* and every South Carolinian felt that this man must be their leader. On December 10, 1832, Jackson denounced the Nullification acts, but the new governor replied with a most daring proclamation, and prepared for war. Congress afterwards receded from its position, and the Ordinance of Nullification was repealed. Strange to say, from this time until his death in 1839, Hayne was never again actively engaged in the political struggles of the period. From time to time, however, in occasional addresses, he showed that his marvelous gifts as an orator had not deserted him.

His was a fiery eloquence. He was a bold, powerful and rapid debater, and his speeches often swept along with a rush that did not always permit his listeners to pause for thought, but instead, carried them away as willing captives. So filled with passion were his words that at times he seemed almost beside himself, and yet he never for a moment lost control of the flood of words. It was a time when bitter sectional feelings possessed nearly every man, and such oratory was natural and indeed necessary. Such conditions do not lead always to broadmindedness, liberalness of view, and a just conception of the fraternity of men: and Hayne was not great in these characteristics. But in the sincerity of his heart he was for the South, first, last, and always; and the South, with its mighty curse of slavery daily sapping away its strength, might well need such a man.

Of course, his debate with Webster was his best effort. Into this controversy he poured forth the accumulated thoughts and emotions of all his past life, and his heart concurred in every word that his lips uttered. "The people whom I represent, Mr. President, are the descendants of those who brought with them to this country, as the most precious of their possessions, 'an ardent love of liberty'; and while that shall be preserved, they will always be found manfully struggling against the consolidation of the Government as the worst of evils. . . . The doctrine that it is the right of a State to judge of the violations of the Constitution on the part of the Federal Government, and to protect her citizens from the operations of unconstitutional laws, was held by the enlightened citizens of Boston, who assembled in Faneuil Hall, on the 25th of January, 1809. They state in that celebrated memorial, that they looked only to the State Legislature, which was

competent to devise relief against the unconstitutional acts of the General Government. . . . Thus it will be seen, Mr. President, that the South Carolina doctrine is the Republican doctrine of '98, —that it was promulgated by the fathers of the faith, —that it was maintained by Virginia and Kentucky in the worst of times,—that it constituted the very pivot on which the political revolution of that day turned,—that it embraces the very principles, the triumph of which, at that time, saved the Constitution at its last gasp, and which New England statesmen were not unwilling to adopt when they believed themselves to be the victims of unconstitutional legislation. . . . Sir, if acting on these high motives,—if animated by that ardent love of liberty, which has always been the most prominent trait in the Southern character, we should be hurried beyond the bounds of a cold and calculating prudence; who is there, with one noble and generous sentiment in his bosom, who would not be disposed, in the language of Burke, to exclaim, 'You must pardon something to the spirit of liberty'?"

With Hayne we must close the study of Southern orators and statesmen of this period. The bloodiest conflict of the nineteenth century was approaching; there was need of thought, persuasion, eloquence. In that noble galaxy of statesmen were many inherently too noble to stoop to petty intrigues, too patriotic to endanger by word or by deed the tottering structures of American liberty. The conceptions of liberty might differ widely; but there was sincerity in each view. And how extreme were the respective views—Webster on the one hand, Hayne on the other!

VI

In ante-bellum days not only the statesmen of the South were expected to possess considerable learn-

ing; but every gentleman—and that included all professional men, planters, and others who did not depend upon manual labor for a livelihood—was almost obliged to have some acquaintance with classical learning and general culture. Especially in the study of history, political economy, ethics, and philosophy was there a well-sustained interest; and in consequence we shall find the cotton or sugar planter, the doctor, or the lawyer spending his leisure moments in writing an essay, a description of some journey, or even a history of his own State. Of such a class were James Wilkerson (1757-1825), who wrote in 1816 an historically valuable volume entitled *Memoirs of My Own Times;* Robert Goodloe Harper (1765-1825), the author of some well-written essays on governmental affairs; John Drayton (1766-1822), who, in his description of a tour through the North and East, his *View of South Carolina* and his *Memoirs of the Revolution in South Carolina* did much for future students of American history; Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), who in his religious works made a most fervent defense of the Christian faith; Ninian Pinkney (1776-1825), the pleasant narrator of leisurely European travels; and Hugh Swinton Legaré (1797-1843), who, while a lawyer, a statesman, and a diplomat, was no less a scholar and writer on literary and historical subjects.

Many indeed might be given extended attention; but, alas, the day of the four-hour sermon, the three-volume novel, and the history beginning with Adam are things of bygone days! Let us glance at a very few of the most noted.

VII

Washington Allston — (1779-1843)

The first is WASHINGTON ALLSTON (1779-1843), of whom Coleridge has said, "He was surpassed by no man of his age in artistic and poetic genius." He was born at Georgetown, South Carolina; but, owing to poor health, he was sent north, and lived at Newport, Rhode Island, until he entered Harvard. It was at Newport that the moving ambition of his life came to him; for there he met the painter, Malbone, and became intensely interested in art. Fired with a new desire in life, he divided his time at Harvard rather unequally between studies and painting, and, as soon as he had graduated, hastened to South Carolina, sold part of his possessions, and sailed for Europe. For a time he was a student at the Royal Academy, London, and later spent several years in France and Italy. He at length returned to America and married, but after a few years, his wife having died, he went back to England, and there, while brooding over his sorrow, he wrote *The Sylphs of the Seasons* and several other poems. Returning again to America, he resided near Boston and died there in 1842.

Allston wrote, besides his poems, a powerful and weird piece of fiction entitled *Monaldi* and a number of essays on art and literature. Despite the fact that his poetry was popular in his own day and his novel widely read, his best work probably is his series of discourses on art. As Coleridge has said, he had the true artistic temperament, and in the discussion of a masterpiece or of a master, he was sincere in his criticism, and intelligible and interesting to any reader, no matter what the status of that person's knowledge of art. A very good example of this

characteristic is found in his comparison of Michael Angelo and Raphael:

"The genius of Michael Angelo was essentially imaginative. It seems rarely to have been excited by the objects with which we are daily familiar; and when he did treat them, it was rather as things past, as they appear to us through the atmosphere of the hallowing memory. We have a striking instance of this in his statue of Lorenzo de Medici; where, retaining of the original only enough to mark the individual, and investing the rest with an air of grandeur that should accord with his actions, he has left to his country, not a mere effigy of the person, but an embodiment of the mind; a portrait for posterity, in which the unborn might recognize Lorenzo the Magnificent.

"But the mind of Raphael was an overflowing fountain of human sympathies; and in all that concerns man, in his vast varieties and complicated relations, from the highest forms of majesty to the humblest condition of humanity, even to the maimed and misshapen, he may well be called a master. His Apostles, his philosophers, and most ordinary subordinates are all to us as living beings; nor do we feel any doubt that they all had mothers, and brothers, and kindred. In the assemblage of the Apostles (already referred to) at the Death of Ananias, we look upon men whom the effusion of the Spirit has equally sublimated above every unholy thought; a common power seems to have invested them all with a preternatural majesty. Yet not an iota of the individual is lost in any one; the gentle bearing and amenity of John still follow him in his office of almoner; nor in Peter does the deep repose of the erect attitude of the Apostle, as he deals the death stroke to the offender by a simple bend of his finger, subdue the energetic, sanguine temperament of the Disciple."

VIII

John James Audubon — (1780-1851)

Now and then there arises from the horde of money-getters a great soul who steals away from the smoke-begrimed factories and the pent-in offices, and, refusing to enter the eternal rush for gold, seeks the solitude of forest and stream. It is necessary that we have such men; for amid the city's roar the artificial is too often monarch; men live and die and never become intimately acquainted with their own souls; and some one must, of necessity, call us back to Nature and to Nature's God. Such a one was JOHN JAMES AUDUBON (1780-1851), than whom no more ardent lover of Nature ever lived. He was born near New Orleans and was educated partly in that city and partly in France, where he also studied painting under David. During his young manhood he had charge of his father's estate in Pennsylvania and for a time was a merchant in various Southern cities. But, with his mind more on the birds and insects in the distant woods than on the goods about him, he failed most dismally as a money-maker. Fortunately for the world, he at length gave up all regular business pursuits, and spent his time in roaming hither and thither in the primeval forest and recording the life story of the wild creatures that he knew and loved.

His greatest production is *The Birds of America*. It is a large work, five volumes of descriptions and narratives and four volumes of bird-portraits, life-size, in colors, and each showing the bird's favorite surroundings, trees, and plants. Such a work has rarely been undertaken in the history of any literature, and certainly nothing of a similar nature has been more thoroughly, more accurately, or more

entertainingly composed. His style is just that which would be expected of a man in love with his subject. Vivid in the extreme, it causes every scene and event to stand before us as though in a picture. All is so rich in tone, so enthusiastic, so full of the color and sunshine of out-door life. And yet, imagination never runs away with the scientific facts. Nature-study is here not a dry-as-dust pursuit, but a spiritual, imaginative, sympathetic revelation, filling the soul with longing for similar knowledge and for a fresher life. Thus, he describes the mocking-bird and its habitation:

"It is where the great magnolia shoots up its majestic trunk, crowned with evergreen leaves, and decorated with a thousand beautiful flowers, that perfume the air around; where the forests and the fields are adorned with blossoms of every hue; where the golden orange ornaments the gardens and groves; where bignonias of various kinds interlace their climbing stems around the white-flowered Stuartia, and, mounting still higher, cover the summits of the lofty trees around, accompanied with innumerable vines that here and there festoon the dense foliage of the magnificent woods, lending to the vernal breeze a slight portion of the perfume of their clustered flowers; where a genial warmth seldom forsakes the atmosphere; where berries and fruits of all descriptions are met with at every step; in a word, kind reader, it is where Nature seems to have paused, as she passed over the earth, and, opening her stores, to have strewed with unsparing hand the diversified seeds from which have sprung all the beautiful forms which I should in vain attempt to describe, that the mocking-bird should have fixed his abode, there only that its wondrous song should be heard. . . . See how he flies round his mate, with motions as light as those of the butterfly. His

tail is widely expanded, he mounts in the air to a small distance, describes a circle, and, again alighting, approaches his beloved ones, his eyes gleaming with delight, for she has already promised to be his and his only. His beautiful wings are gently raised, he bows to his love, and, again bouncing upwards, opens his bill and pours forth his melody, full of exultation at the conquest which he has made.

"They are not the soft sounds of the flute or of the hautboy that I hear, but the sweeter notes of Nature's own music. The mellowness of the song, the varied modulations and graduations, the extent of its compass, the great brilliancy of execution, are unrivalled. There is probably no bird in the world that possesses all the musical qualifications of this king of song, who has derived all from Nature's self."

Thus this remarkable man observed and wrote. His whole life was largely one of solitude, calmness, and obscurity; and yet it could but be full often of intense pleasure; for his work was his paradise. His last days were spent at Minniesland, now Audubon Park, New York City. His was a finer spirit than that of his fellowman, contented in the life of Nature, not needing the sympathy which among his thrifty brethren he would have sought in vain.

"To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness ere he is aware."

IX

Francis Lister Hawks — (1798-1866)

The clergy has always played an important part in American life, and while in the South it never possessed that almost despotic power which it so long held in New England, there have been in its ranks, as we have seen, many leaders in Southern movements. Especially has this been true in matters of education and literature. Among such moving spirits was Francis Lister Hawks (1798-1866), of the Episcopal Church. This good and learned man was a native of North Carolina, and received part of his education in the university of that State. In 1827 he became a minister, holding important positions in New Orleans, Baltimore, and other Southern cities; but despite the heavy and responsible duties thus placed upon him, he found time daily to take part in public movements occurring about him. He was the first president of the University of Louisiana; he instituted efforts for better educational facilities in the South; he was frequently called upon as a public lecturer; he was a prolific writer.

Among his many works are the *History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, Egypt and Its Monuments, Romance of Biography, and Cyclopaedia of Biography;* but by far his best production is the admirable *History of North Carolina.* He himself declared it a labor of love, and its character warrants the assertion; for it possesses the lingering touches, the never-failing interest, and the color of romance that give a true historical narrative its permanency. And, yet, there is the studied accuracy of a scholar. However, no better criticism of a book can ever be given than a typical extract

from its pages. Here, then, is a portion of his narrative telling the pitiful story of the Lost Colony of Roanoke:

"White [the governor] found the island of Roanoke a desert. As he approached he sounded a signal trumpet, but no answer was heard to disturb the melancholy stillness that brooded over the deserted spot. What had become of the wretched colonists? No man may with certainty say; for all that White found to indicate their fate was a high post bearing on it the letters CRO. and at the former site of their village he found a tree which had been deprived of its bark and bore in well cut characters the word CROATAN. There was some comfort in finding no cross carved above the word, but this was all the comfort the unhappy father and grand-father could find. He of course hastened back to the fleet, determined instantly to go to Croatan, but a combination of unpropitious events defeated his anxious wishes; storms and a deficiency of food forced the vessels to run for the West Indies for the purpose of refitting, wintering, and returning; but even in this plan White was disappointed and found himself reluctantly compelled to run for the western islands and thence for England. Thus ended the effort to find the lost colony; they were never heard of. That they went to Croatan, where the natives were friendly, is almost certain; that they became gradually incorporated with them is probable from the testimony of a historian (John Lawson) who lived in North Carolina and wrote in 1714: 'The Hatteras Indians who live on Roanoke Island or much frequent it, tell us' (says he) 'that several of their ancestors were white people and could talk in a book as we do; the truth of which is confirmed by gray eyes being found frequently amongst these Indians and no others.' "

X

Charles Gayarré — (1805-1895)

Every student of Southern Literature must be perplexed to know in what period to place CHARLES ETIENNE ARTHUR GAYARRÉ (1805-1895). His life was so long, so full and rich in its every year; he was affected by so many movements and schools of thought; he saw so many theories and beliefs rise, flourish, and decay, so large a body of literature written,—could such a man belong to any one period? Perhaps it is best to place him in the era closing with the middle of the nineteenth century; for by that time fame had already come to him. But the rich productions of his intellect had but fairly begun at that date.

He was born at New Orleans of a family descended from the first settlers of that city and from the nobility of France. His paternal grandfather introduced sugar-culture into Louisiana; his maternal grandfather was treasurer of the colony under France; his ancestors, the Grandprés, were among the founders of that colony. Thus, if heredity count for anything, he was highly fortunate in his birth. He was educated in New Orleans, and, after studying law at Philadelphia, he spent much of his life in his native city. Shortly after his return from the North he wrote in French *An Historical Essay on Louisiana.* This first attempt was highly praised and gained him some prominence. At the age of twenty-five he was a member of the State legislature, and five years later (1835) he was chosen United States Senator. But at this time his health failed him, and, having been advised to go abroad, he spent eight years in France. There, Irving-like, he was a rather active invalid; for instead of resting, he worked most industriously collecting material

for his *History of Louisiana,* also written in French. This was indeed a notable piece of work, and the unstinted praise bestowed upon it was highly merited. From this time forth his position as a scholarly writer was firmly established, and year after year, by his careful, accurate, and ever entertaining productions he continued to gain fresh laurels.

He was an ardent defender of Southern customs and institutions, and without doubt he deserved the affectionate title of "Champion of the South." Especially zealous among such defensive works is his *Creoles of History and Creoles of Romance,* a study refuting the statements and descriptions of the novelist, George W. Cable. A man living to such an age as Gayarré did, even if a slow writer, could write much, and our author does not disappoint us in the quantity of his work. His productions cover a wide range of subjects in history and biography, and to these must be added two dramas, *The School for Politics* and *Dr. Bluff in Russia,* a comedy.

Gayarré was a gentleman of the old school. Ever quietly industrious, he was not drawn into the whirlpool of boasted American strenuousness. If we may so express it, he took time to get on good speaking terms with himself, and his courteous and dignified bearing gave the impression of a man who was complete master of himself. Similar traits are apparent in his writings. Although the style is not always so precise and terse as modern tastes demand, there is plenty of color and ease, while legends and traditions give the whole a tinge of romance. As Maurice Thompson has observed, there is "the temptation to be a romancer rather than remain a historian." We forgive the weakness—if weakness it be—in such lines as these following, taken from his *History of Louisiana.* The time is 1751.

"On board of the same ships, there came sixty girls, who were transported to Louisiana at the expense of the King. It was the last emigration of the kind. These girls were married to such soldiers as had distinguished themselves for their good conduct, and who, in consideration of their marriage, were discharged from service. Concessions of land were made to each happy pair, with one cow and its calf, one cock and five hens, one gun, one axe, and one spade. During the first three years of their settlement they were to receive rations of provisions, and a small quantity of powder, shot, grains, and seeds of all sorts.

"Such is the humble origin of many of our most respectable and wealthy families, and well may they be proud of a social position, which is due to the honest industry and hereditary virtues of several generations. Whilst some of patrician extraction, crushed under the weight of vices, or made inert by sloth, or labor-contemning pride, and degenerating from pure gold into vile dross, have been swept away, and have sunk into the dregs and sewers of the commonwealth. Thus in Louisiana, the high and the low, although the country has never suffered from any political or civil convulsions, seem to have, in the course of one century, frequently exchanged with one another their respective positions, much to the philosopher's edification."

With Gayarré the present study of this class of prose writers must close. Such men, though not so widely read as the fiction writers, are important as intellectual pathfinders. Their attempts to show the philosophy of life and its movements were particularly welcome in the South; for their readers, we must remember, constituted for the most part the leisurely rural class, who held rather persistently to the older schools of literature and of thought in gen-

eral. With the coming of the Civil War, the attention of all thinking men was turned to the ominous present, and speculative philosophies gave way to fearful realities. The discussion of war and its miseries held with tyrannous power the minds of all men, and the ancients and their schools returned for the time being to oblivion. Nor did they return with anything of the old-time vigor. For, with the close of this second great period that tried men's souls, the New South was created, and the furnace, the factory, and manifold other agencies of production, with their busy activities, destroyed for all time the unwarranted leisure of the Old South.

FICTION

In fiction the ante-bellum South produced but one writer of the first rank—Poe; but it has never suffered from a dearth of story-tellers. Both the natural tastes of the people and the environment were highly conducive to narrative productions. For its readers, though fond of law, court-room eloquence, and statesmanship, and possessing a liking for the more serious *Reviews* of Edinburgh and London, so popular in the opening years of the nineteenth century, had on the shelves of their libraries well-thumbed volumes of Fielding, Smollet, Sterne, Richardson, and others of the early English novelists; and many a quiet hour, stolen from the busy court-room or resounding legislative hall or far-stretched cotton and tobacco fields, was spent with these now forsaken authors. In that day the man of the world spared more time for such things of culture than now. Especially was this true in a section where cities and their opportunities were extremely few, where among the upper classes wealth

was attained without strenuous efforts, and where leisure for self-improvement was a recognized necessity.

And what of the environment? To the close observer the people south of the Potomac in that day would seem a very fountain of material for fiction. So many classes, so many oddities, so many conditions brought about by ancestry, locality, training,—what better things for romance-making could any man desire? While New England was settled largely by a people of one class and of one general way of thinking, the Southern States had the aristocratic planter, often a descendant of English nobility, the shiftless folk known as the "poor whites," the negroes, born either in America or among greatly differing African tribes, the Spanish blood in Florida and South Carolina, the French and Creole in Louisiana,—all these and others. Of these the planter, the poor white, and the negro were, of course, the most important in literature; for every community had all three, and their respective characteristics were known and easily recognized by all.

Many of the conditions were conducive to fun-making, and though in the next period we shall find this section a land of bitterness and pathos, it would seem that at the time now under discussion this was indeed the home of laughter. The eccentricities of one class were highly amusing to another, and the class thus entertained furnished amusement for still another class. The negro was then, as now, a fountain-head of anecdotes, while the customs and superstitions of that class which he scornfully dubbed "the po' white trash" were an unfailing source of humor. In such a literature dialect must hold an important place, and description will be an ever present helpmate. It will not be a subtle humor; for subtlety is not usually a companion of ignorance,

and ignorance is characteristic of the people described. The jokes are broad and not sharp-edged, clear and never deep. Such humor is a producer of whole-souled laughter, and, taken all in all, while not possessing the rare excellence of an Irving masterpiece, it is more than good and admirably natural. But let us drop the general and enter into details; let us observe briefly a very few of these story-writers of ante-bellum days.

I

Alexander Garden — (1757-1829)

In 1822 there appeared a volume entitled *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War in America*—a book gaining sufficient popularity to warrant a second edition in 1828. Its author, Alexander Garden, was a Charlestonian and was very proud of the fact. With the exception of his schooldays in Glasgow, Scotland, his entire life was spent in the historic town, and in all of the movements for the city he was always an enthusiastic leader. Having served in the Revolutionary War, first as an officer in Lee's famous legion and later as an aid-de-camp to General Greene, he was intimately acquainted with many of the great leaders of those days and had seen many occurrences of vast importance in the nation's history. When, therefore, as an old man, he came to look back upon the trying days of his and the nation's youth, he composed a book of such fullness and genuine interest that to this day it is considered one of the source-books for the history of the period.

The book has been reserved for notice under this division of our study because of the fact that it is so largely a collection of narratives, and, moreover, narratives often sparkling with the wit of repartee.

Be it remembered that the veteran was intensely patriotic, and his stories, like those of most old soldiers, are somewhat one-sided. They generally show the discomfiture of the British and the firmness, bravery, and sharp wit of the American, or more particularly of the *Southern* woman. For instance, he tells of an encounter between a British officer and an unabashed Colonial dame:

"Mrs. Daniel Hall, having obtained permission to pay a visit to her mother on John's Island, was on the point of embarking, when an officer, stepping forward, in the most authoritative manner, demanded the key of her trunk. 'What do you expect to find there?' said the lady. 'I seek for treason,' was the reply. 'You may save yourself the trouble of search, then,' said Mrs. Hall—'You may find a plenty of it at my tongue's end!'"

A book containing a large number of such anecdotes and written less than ten years after the second war with Great Britain could not fail of popularity. From time to time other veterans of either war related their memories of strange adventures, and thus at length a large body of sketches amusing, pathetic, or tragic came into existence. In time every daily or weekly of any importance had its staff of contributors to the sketch or short story column, and from such a beginning nearly every Southern humorist and fiction writer of ante-bellum days traced his literary career. The newspaper during this period was indeed a leading spirit in Southern Literature.

II

Davy Crockett — (1786-1836)

Attention has been called to the fact that much of the literature of the South has been the work of the amateur. Few indeed were the Southern men and women prior to the Civil War who made literature a *profession*. In the opinion of many it was hardly the pursuit for a "gentleman," and Southerners of this period were great sticklers regarding that title. The person whom we shall now discuss was no exception to the rule of amateurishness, as his writings will easily show; but as a stickler about titles he held no claims. Who has not heard of DAVY CROCKETT? Upon the mention of that name visions of bears, Indians, and battles in the wilderness immediately appear; but let it not be forgotten that Davy was something of a writer, and in his day a very popular one too.

David Crockett was born at Limestone, Green county, Tennessee. His father opened a tavern on the much-traveled road extending from Abingdon to Knoxville, and there among the passing throng of men of many classes and from many sections, he spent the early years of his life. He was sent to a country school, but on the fourth day, so he claims, he had a fight with the teacher and hastily left for parts unknown. Year after year was spent in the wilderness west of his home, and not until he was eighteen did he return to his boyhood home. He found himself an extremely ignorant man, unable either to read or to write, and skillful in no work but hunting. He again entered school, learned the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic in two months' time, soon married, and removed again to the wilderness. He served in the War of 1812, and,

returning once more to the forest settlement, became famous along the frontier as the best shot in the section. In 1821 he became a candidate for representative in the Tennessee legislature, and by his skill in shooting and in telling jokes, more than by his knowledge of political conditions, he secured the election. He was twice re-elected; for, despite his evident lack of training, he showed himself an honest, fearless, and often capable leader of men.

From an obscure hunter in the backwoods to a United States Congressman in six years is a quick stride; but Crockett accomplished it by the year 1827, and, moreover, was re-elected. He was long a notable figure on the streets of Washington; for he rather scorned fashion and wore his hair and clothing in a manner more suitable for the wilderness than for the national capital. Strange stories about his origin, life, and deeds were circulated, and Davy, in sheer self-defense, felt called upon to take up a weapon very cumbrous to him—the pen—and write his *Autobiography* (1834). Surprising indeed was the success of the unique book, and the hunter-statesman-author soon brought out another volume, *A Tour of the North and Down East* (1835). In the same year, however, he began to oppose his old friend, Jackson, and, finding that this act had weakened his influence in Tennessee, he removed to Texas and aided that State in the struggle for independence. In 1836 his *Exploits and Adventures in Texas* appeared, and with this his career ended. At the surrender of the Alamo in that year, he and five other prisoners were shot by order of General Santa Anna.

Whatever may be the defects of this man's work, it is at all times strikingly original. His grammar was of a unique species; his spelling was at times wonderful in its simplicity; but his strong mind and

plain common sense aided him in couching his words in a telling way. And his independence in literature was as marked as his fearlessness in hunting.

"I don't know of anything in my book to be criticised on by honorable men. Is it on my spelling?—that's not my trade. Is it on my grammar?—I hadn't time to learn it, and make no pretensions to it. Is it on the order and arrangement of my book?—I never wrote one before, and never read very many; and, of course, know mighty little about that. Will it be on the authorship of the book?—this I claim, and I'll hang on to it, like a waxplaster. . . . I would not be such a fool, or knave either, as to deny that I have had it hastily run over by a friend or so, and that some little alterations have been made in the spelling and grammar; and I am not so sure that it is not the worse of even that, for I despise this way of spelling contrary to nature. And as for grammar, it's pretty much a thing of nothing at last, after all the fuss that's made over it . . . while critics were learning grammar, and learning to spell, I, and 'Doctor Jackson, L.L.D.,' were fighting in the wars."

The collection of narratives, which he entitled an *Autobiography,* is good in its dramatic quality. The stories are exciting and compel interest; they have the directness, the virility of a man of fearless deeds. Bear hunts, Indian fights, thrilling adventures of many kinds,—these are the substance of the book. For instance, he describes a bear hunt taken at night. The bear is "treed."

"I commenced loading for a third fire, but the first thing I knowed the bear was down among my dogs, and they were fighting all around me. I had my big butcher in my belt, and I had a pair of dressed buckskin breeches on. So I took out my knife, and stood, determined, if he should get hold

of me, to defend myself in the best way I could. I stood there for some time, and could now and then see a white dog I had, but the rest of them and the bear, which were dark coloured, I couldn't see at all, it was so miserable dark. They still fought around me, and sometimes within three feet of me, but at last, the bear got down into one of the cracks that the earthquake had made in the ground, about four feet deep, and I could tell the biting end of him by the hollering of my dogs. So I took my gun and pushed the muzzle of it about, till I thought I had it against the main part of his body, and fired; but it happened to be only the flesh part of his foreleg. With this I jumped out of the crack, and he and the dogs had another hard fight around me, as before. At last, however, they forced him back into the crack again, as he was when I had shot. I made a lunge with my long knife, and fortunately struck him right through the heart; at which he just sank down, and I crawled out in a hurry."

Such a form of literature was not without its use in those days. It kept the cultivated East in touch with the untamed West: it stirred the imagination of young readers; its tendency was to give virility to succeeding literature. In the somewhat epic primitiveness of its scenes and deeds there is that which may serve as splendid material for the hand of a future master.

III

It has been mentioned that one source of humor in the South was the "poor whites," the most ignorant and yet probably the most well-meaning people in the United States. In many ways they show themselves a class left far behind in the forward movement of civilization,—a people who, through

their privations, remoteness from centers of population, and lack of incentives, have failed to advance in those characteristics which help man to cope with the ever-changing problems of the present-day world. Perhaps in no other way is this fact shown so forcibly as in the *language* of this strange people. It is a peculiar dialect, inclining, in its use of words and in its phraseology, back to the speech of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, while in the inflection of its nouns and verbs it not infrequently holds memories of the English of Chaucer and Langland. A strange, quaint tongue it is,—unprogressive, lingering beyond its day, symbolical of the people that speak it.

Augustus Baldwin Longstreet — (1790-1870)

In Georgia where they are known as "Crackers," they have always been very numerous, and consequently some of the best descriptions of them ever written are to be found in the *Georgia Scenes* (1835) of Augustus Baldwin Longstreet (1790-1870). Longstreet was born at Augusta, Georgia, and, as a boy, studied at Richmond Academy, a school which he so thoroughly despised that only with much persuading could he be induced to remain for even a few months. Yet it was in this very school that the first important arousing of his intellect occurred; for a room-mate, George McDuffie, who was an intense student, caused him to note his own ignorance and long for a broader knowledge. He became a member of a South Carolina school taught by the famous Dr. Moses Waddell, advanced rapidly, and in 1811 entered the Junior class at Yale. The two years spent in that institution he always referred to as the happiest days of his life. After graduating, he studied in the law school at Litchfield, Connecticut, and in 1815 returned to Georgia. Six

years later he was a member of the State legislature and the next year became a Judge of the Supreme Court.

Year after year Longstreet's fame as a jurist increased, and with his establishing of *The Augusta Sentinel* in 1838 his opportunities in politics seem to have been most encouraging. But in that year a notable change occurred in his life. The death of a relative called his attention to the claims of religion; he studied the question deeply; and, in the end, he decided to give up his ambitions as a statesman and enter the ministry. He was made pastor of a church in his native city, and henceforth he was a religious power. In 1839 he became president of Centenary College, Louisiana; later, president of the University of Mississippi, and in his last years, president of South Carolina State College. He was again president of the University of Mississippi when he died.

Longstreet wrote much, among his most popular works being *Letters from Georgia to Massachusetts* and *William Mitten* (1858); but by far the best piece of writing that he ever attempted is *Georgia Scenes, Characters, and Incidents.* These sketches first appeared in newspapers, later were gathered in a volume in the South (1835), and finally were published in New York in 1840. In after years Longstreet, the preacher, became very much ashamed of the pieces and in fact considered them such sinful efforts that when a second edition appeared in 1867 he absolutely disowned it. And yet he has caught the very spirit of the people whom he brings before us. The pathetic and yet humorous sameness of their life, the long conversations over trifling affairs that other people would dismiss with a word, the ridiculous narrowness of their views, the ina-

bility to grasp the principles of modern society, the prejudices, superstition, credulity—these traits are all well portrayed.

In our present study space is too limited to discuss many of these portrayals, and short specimens from the conversation of these people cannot show their character in a satisfactory manner. Let us notice one figure, not exactly belonging to the "Cracker" element, but yet serving as an example of Longstreet's humor. Ned Brace, the practical joker, is a good picture of the typical country wit, such as may yet be seen in any rural district. His humor is broad and not always so refined as it might be; and yet it compels laughter. For instance, Ned goes to church:

"Ned enters the church in as fast a walk as he could possibly assume; proceeded about half down the aisle and popped himself down in his seat as quick as if he had been shot. The more thoughtless of the congregation began to titter, and the graver peeped up slily, but solemnly at him.

"The pastor rose, and before giving out the hymn, observed that *singing* was a part of the service, in which he thought the whole congregation ought to join. . . . As soon as the tune was raised, Ned struck in, with one of the loudest, hoarsest, and most discordant voices that ever annoyed a solemn assembly.

" 'I would observe,' said the preacher, before giving out the next two lines, 'that there are some people who have not the gift of singing; such of course are not expected to sing.' . . .

"As soon as the pastor commenced his sermon, Ned opened his eyes, threw back his head, dropt his under jaw, and surrendered himself to the most intense interest. . . .

"The effect which his conduct had upon the congregation, and their subsequent remarks, must be left to the imagination of the reader. . . .

" 'Bless that good man who came in the church so quick,' said a venerable matron as she left the church door, 'how he was affected by the sarment!' "

Ned, who was a great strapping fellow, met a funeral procession and, seeing a dwarf at the end of the line, stepped in and walked with the little fellow, thus greatly endangering the solemnity of the occasion. "They proceeded but a little way before Ned inquired of his companion who was dead.

" 'Mr. Noah Bills,' said the little man.

" 'Nan?' said Ned, raising his hand to his ear in token of deafness, and bending his head to the speaker.

" 'Mr. Noah Bills,' repeated the little man, loud enough to disturb the two couples immediately before him.

" 'Mrs. Noah's Bill,' said Ned, with mortification and astonishment. 'Do the white persons pay such respect to niggers in Savannah? *I* sha'n't do it.' So saying, he left the procession. . . . The procession now exhibited a most mortifying spectacle—the head of it in mourning and in tears, and the foot of it convulsed with laughter."

IV

William Tappan Thompson — (1812-1882)

Another writer of somewhat the same order as Longstreet, and indeed a co-worker with him in newspaper editing, was William Tappan Thompson (1812-1882). He was a native of Ohio, and was the first white child born in the Western Reserve. At the age of twenty-three he went to Georgia, spent the greater part of his life there, and became an enthusiastic leader in many Southern movements,

With Judge Longstreet he edited the *States'-Rights Sentinel* at Augusta, and, passing from one paper to another, he at length made himself famous through *The Miscellany,* published at Madison, Georgia. For here it was that he conceived the idea of describing the life of the strange rural class of the section, and in this paper were published the sketches known as *Major Jones's Courtship* (1840). Three years later came *Major Jones's Chronicles of Pineville* and *Major Jones's Sketches of Travel.* In the meantime Thompson had gone to Baltimore, where, with Park Benjamin, he edited *The Western Continent.* He remained in this work until 1850 and then, having removed to Savannah, he established *The Morning News,* with which paper he was connected until his death.

Thompson essayed several forms of literature. He wrote a farce, *The Live Indian;* he dramatized *The Vicar of Wakefield;* he wrote sketches and dissertations for various periodicals; but the real genius of the man is shown in his *Major Jones* series. What ridiculous mishaps come to this gallant Georgian, Major Jones! Well meaning, brave, hospitable, he yet has the faculty of making himself ridiculous. But by "hook or crook" he nevertheless comes forth victor at last. Thus, to win Miss Mary's hand, he hanged himself up, as a Christmas gift, in a bag on her back porch, but during the night the ardent lover almost perished because of the intense cold and because, also, of a dog that stood under the bag and barked "like he thought he'd treed something." But when, next morning, Miss Mary discovered the contents of the sack, the half-frozen major might well say, "It was worth hangin' in a meal bag from one Christmas to another."

In these sketches both situation and dialect combine to make a wholesome humor, while the major's

utter innocence of his own ridiculous appearance adds to the entertainment. The dog's barking and snapping at the bag is a very serious affair to the lover.

"'Bow! wow! wow!' ses he. Then he'd smell agin, and try to git up to the bag. 'Git out,' ses I, very low, for fear the galls mought hear me. 'Bow! wow!' ses he. 'Begone, you bominable fool!' ses I, and I felt all over in spots, for I spected every minit he'd nip me, and what made it worse, I didn't know wharabouts he'd take hold. 'Bow! wow! wow!' Then I tried coaxin'. 'Come here, good feller,' ses I, and whistled a little to him, but it wasn't no use. Thar he stood, and kep up his everlastin' barkin' and whinin' all night. I couldn't tell when daylight was breakin' only by the chickens crowin', and I was monstrous glad to hear 'em, for if I'd had to stay thar one hour more, I don't believe I'd ever got out of that bag alive."

Here again we have something typical of the rural life of the Old South. In such characters as Major Jones are many of the virtues and few of the graver faults; but there is that about the provincial and outlandish which never fails to attract what might be called the "universal mind." Lacking perhaps in subtlety and depth, such work as Thompson's retains, however, a sense of truthfulness that makes it all the more pleasing.

V

Johnson Hooper — (1815-1863)

The last of these sketch writers here to be discussed, but by no means the last that might be discussed, is Johnson Hooper (1815-1863). He was born in North Carolina, but, while still a child, removed to Alabama, and there, as editor, lawyer, and statesman, performed notable services for the State and for the entire South. He was secretary of the provisional

Confederate Congress, and during the Civil War held various important positions under the new government. The first work that called the attention of the public to Hooper as a writer, was his *Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs* (1845), a racy piece of literature, describing a gambling sharp of the Southwest during its first boom days. Six years later he followed this successful venture with his *Widow Rugby's Husband and Other Tales of Alabama;* but this was not a work of the same merit, and it very deservedly failed to gain the same wide popularity.

Here again we find the humorist dealing with the "poor whites," not Georgia Crackers this time, it is true, but Alabamians of the same type. Again, too, we find the same conflict between ignorant conservatism and progress. The ridiculous suspicions and, at the same time, the extreme credulity of these rustics of the back counties afford many a humorous situation. But beneath all the fun, as we read of the stern, gloomy ideas of God and religion, the inborn rascality found even among such well-meaning people, and the struggle between goodness and greed, we discover, perhaps unintentionally on the author's part, an element of pathos. The purpose of the book, however, is that of fun-making, and in that particular it is a decided success. For instance, the census officer comes to an old widow's house to secure the required information, and the suspicious lady threatens to "sick" the dogs on them.

" 'Last week Bill Stonecker's two-year-old steer jumped my yard fence, and Bull and Pomp tuk him by the throat and they killed him afore my boys could break 'im loose to save the world.'

" 'Yes, ma'am,' said we meekly; 'Bull and Pomp seem to be very fine dogs.'

"At length . . . we remarked that . . . we would just set down the age, sex, and complexion of each member of her family.

" 'No sich a thing—you'll do no sich a thing,' said she, . . . 'I've got five in family, and they are all a plaguy sight whiter than you, and whether they are he or she is none of your consarns.' "

Thus the rant goes on, and the old woman finally offers, indeed begs for, the opportunity to kill the marshal, several government officers and at length President Van Buren himself. " 'A pretty fellow to be eating his vittles out'n gold spoons that poor people's taxed for, and raisin' an army to get him made king of Ameriky.' " In time the census men give up their effort, but when safely on their horses, they decided to give her a parting compliment.

" 'Do you want to get married?'

" 'Here, Bull,' shouted the widow, 'sick him, Pomp . . . Si-c-k, Pomp—sick, sick, si-c-k him, Bull—suboy, suboy, suboy.' "

Humor has improved greatly since those times, and today it cannot be doubted that America's most original, and perhaps best, contributions to the world's literature have been along this line. Possessing a familiarity with the more subtle and refined efforts of the later wit, we may find the sketches that made our fathers laugh, rather common and even unentertaining, but placing ourselves, in imagination, among the same surroundings, and, remembering that many of the characters and scenes described were familiar to every Southerner, we can understand, perhaps, the wide popularity of these pioneers in American humor.

VI

Of sketch writers there were many; every newspaper possessed a more than abundant supply. But

the number of men and women capable of the more sustained effort required in novel-writing was very small, and of these few only two or three at the most deserve a place among the leading American novelists. Many of these attempts in the South, as well as in the North, were mere copies and unintentional burlesques of foreign productions, and possessed no more American flavor than if they had been produced in the jungles of Africa. Lords, dukes, counts, weeping, sentimental ladies, charitable robbers, and other beings largely unknown in America were not infrequently brought into the narrative, while "apt alliteration's artful aid" was often apparent in the wording of the title-page. But a few men, such as John Pendleton Kennedy and William Gilmore Simms, grasped the idea of an American romance, and showed to the reader of their day that their native land was capable of the same color and imaginative treatment as was the Old World.

George Tucker — (1775-1861)

Among the first of such writers was GEORGE TUCKER (1775-1861) of Virginia. He was born in the Bermudas, came to Virginia in his twelfth year, and was educated by the brilliant and kind-hearted St. George Tucker. Having taken up the practice of law in Lynchburg, he naturally drifted into politics, and in 1819 entered Congress. In 1825 he became professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Science in the University of Virginia, a position which he held for twenty years.

Perhaps this man, who was far more a thinker than a dreamer in the realm of the imaginative, should have been discussed among the writers of serious prose; for the long list of his works contains such titles as *Essays on Taste, Morals, and Policy, Principles of Rent, Wages, Etc., Literature of the*

United States, Life of Thomas Jefferson, and *History of the United States.* But in spite of the depth of these efforts, some of which are still considered of importance, the works which approach most nearly to real contributions to literature are his novel, *The Valley of the Shenandoah,* and the satirical romance, *A Voyage to the Moon.* These, which were written in Tucker's youth, while showing some power of imagination, have not the freedom of expression, thought, and character required in the making of a great book. And yet, because of the dearth of something better, these two efforts were in his day rather widely read and spoken of with approval. Today they are important only because they serve us in noting the gradual development of American, and especially Southern, fiction.

VII

William Carruthers — (1806-1872)

Another novel of those early days, and one that was indeed exceedingly popular, was *Cavaliers of Virginia* (1832), written by William Carruthers (1806-1872). Little has been recorded concerning the life of Carruthers, and doubtless many of his best sketches are now hopelessly lost in magazines long since dead. He was born in Virginia, and after a course at Washington College, in that State, studied medicine and went to Savannah to practise. He was a frequent and welcomed contributor to the earlier magazines, and one of these articles, describing a perilous ascent of Natural Bridge, and published in *Knickerbocker Magazine* (1838) has been one of the most widely read sketches ever written by an American. Indeed, to this day, this early effort is reprinted in many books of popular selections.

His writings are all spirited, and his two longest works, *Cavaliers of Virginia* and *Knights of the Horseshoe* (1845), deal with their themes in a surprisingly fresh and artistic manner. In the first we have, as the center of interest, Bacon's Rebellion, and the enmity ever existing between the Royalists and the followers of Cromwell in Virginia; in the second is portrayed Governor Spotswood's momentous expedition into the unknown regions beyond the mountains of Virginia; and in both, though there is something of a lack of individuality in the characters and of logic in the plot, the spirited action, the freshness of tone, and the conception of the greater nation to come save the books from mediocrity.

VIII

Nathaniel Beverley Tucker — (1784-1851)

Such were the first attempts at novel-writing in the South. Those early efforts are seldom heard of now, and perhaps their fate is a deserved one. But in 1836 there appeared a book that was hailed as a work of rich worth, and that, in one way or another, held itself before the reading public for many a year after its first appearance. This was *The Partisan Leader* by Nathaniel Beverley Tucker (1784-1851). The author was a son of St. George Tucker, and, of course, with such a father, received the best in education then obtainable in the South. After graduation at William and Mary College and after the inevitable course in law, he went, in 1815, to Missouri to practise his profession, and during the fifteen years spent in that State met with enviable success. But once a Virginian always a Virginian, and in 1834 we find the

lawyer a professor in his *alma mater,* a position which he retained during the remaining years of his life.

The lawyer in Southern Literature is worthy of a thesis, and therefore no attempt to enlarge upon the subject will be made at this time. But of the many writers of the legal cult Nathaniel Tucker was perhaps the most talented and the most successful. Widely known in his day as the writer of many thoughtful essays on public questions, the author of a volume on Political Science, and the biographer of John Randolph, he added much to his fame by his novels, *George Balcombe, Gertrude,* and, above all, *The Partisan Leader.* The first two were above the average fiction of the time; but they possessed neither importance of subject nor merit of construction and style sufficient to preserve them long. *The Partisan Leader* stirred the hearts of thousands both North and South. When this book first appeared, its title-page bore the following words: "The Partisan Leader, a Tale of the Future, by William Edward Sydney;" and as this indicates, the story is a prophecy dealing with startling events to come. It tells of great national troubles to occur within a few years, of division and of war; and, strange to say, outlines with surprising exactness what really took place in 1861. Naturally such a book was a subject of wide and bitter discussion, and it proved to be so agitating that endeavors were made to suppress it as being a menace to the government. In 1861, when suspicion reigned on every hand, it was reprinted in the North as *A Key to the Disunion Conspiracy,* and during the course of the great strife was frequently quoted to prove that a plot for such an uprising had been forming for many, many years.

The scene of the story is Virginia, and the point of view naturally is thoroughly Southern. "By a long series of encroachments by the Federal Government, our federative system is supposed to be destroyed, and a consolidated government, with the forms of a republic and the powers of a monarchy, to be established on its ruins." Here indeed is opportunity for an imaginative student of political science, and Tucker proved to be such a person. That he worked out the scheme logically is proved by successive events; that he did it in a picturesque and convincing manner the book itself shows.

Doubtless it is a matter of regret to every writer on literature that the quality, or character of a novel is so difficult to express; for, unlike the poem or the essay, short extracts showing action, character, or even style, can rarely be given. And so it is with this book which in ante-bellum days so greatly interested the Southern reader. As was the case with many works of fiction in this period, the book was composed after the manner of Cooper; broad characterization, quick, intense action, a sweeping manner, and an ignoring of artistic details. This was the day of the "big bow-wow strain" of Scott and not of the quiet, softer tones of Jane Austen. Perhaps, then, *The Partisan Leader* would seem to the modern reader somewhat strained in parts and its characters and actions entirely too heroic and not sufficiently "human": but at all times, in the discussion of this period, the fact must not be lost sight of that this was a time of intensely bitter feelings and that the perspective was, of necessity, warped and drawn out of all symmetry. It was a story with a warning, and that warning proved to be the forerunner of a heart-rending reality.

IX

In the work of JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY (1795-1870) and of WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS (1806-1870) we find the best Southern novels of the ante-bellum period, and indeed among the best written in America prior to the Civil War. In the writings of both of these men there seem to be a dawning perception of what the novel might be, a freedom from imitation, and a fluency of style not found in previous efforts in the South. Today the fiction of both is still a source of entertainment; and certain qualities, both from an historical and a dramatic standpoint, will probably make the volumes interesting for generations to come.

Of the two leaders Kennedy was less admirable as a fighter of adverse circumstances; but it is very doubtful whether his genius was of a very much inferior order. He was born at Baltimore and received a good education in that city. As a youth of eighteen, he entered the American army then engaged in the War of 1812, and at its close, returning to his native city, he took up the study of law, and in 1816 began, in a very desultory sort of way, it is true, to practise the profession. But his love for it was small; literature enticed him; and from 1818 to 1820 we find him engaged with Peter Hoffman Cruise in editing a periodical entitled *The Red Book*. From 1820 to 1823 he was a member of the Maryland legislature. Then followed a busy period of literary and political activity, during which he was a member of Congress, Secretary of Navy under Fillmore, editor of several magazines, and one of the founders and trustees of the Peabody Institute. Despite the manifold duties of his life, he found

John Pendleton Kennedy — (1795-1870)

time to work, both by example and by precept, for the cause of Southern Literature. His early help to Poe and other struggling young writers should ever be held in grateful remembrance, while his own often discouraging endeavors to establish Southern papers and periodicals and to interest the people in their own literature were indeed heroic.

His own writings are testimony to his zeal for the cause. The subjects in which he took a vital interest were many, with the result that the surprisingly large number of essays written by him may still serve as food for reflection to every class of readers. His *Life of William Wirt* (1849) is a standard today; his political satire, *Annals of Quodlibet,* aroused thousands of contemporary readers; *Mr. Ambrose's Letters, Written during the Civil War,* was a keen and effective work. All that he wrote possessed some mark of genius. But it is through the three novels, *Swallow Barn* (1832), *Horse-Shoe Robinson* (1835), and *Rob of the Bowl* (1838) that his memory truly lives. The first of these deals with Virginia and is largely a description of the Virginia farmer of the early twenties; the second tells the story of early Tory ascendency in South Carolina; while the third shows the struggles of the Catholic settlers of Maryland. All distinctly Southern, be it observed; and for the very reason that they dealt with subjects thoroughly familiar to their author, they met with well-deserved success. In England they were widely read and were considered by many authors and critics as worthy of much attention. Thackeray, for one, was delighted, and when Kennedy went abroad the two became fast friends. On one occasion the great English novelist invited the American to write a chapter in a novel then being printed, and the result was the thoroughly interesting fourth chapter in the second book of *The*

Virginians. And Kennedy is not without a reading public today. But the number of his admirers is far smaller than it should be; for the well-drawn pictures of those early days, and the truth and vividness of the historical actions do not fail to make most readable narratives.

Possessing little of the subtlety of Hawthorne, Kennedy made his characters broad, but distinctly human; and, as types of the rough and ready frontiersman of the time, they appear true to life. The heroes of his imagination are honest, perhaps too frank, and pugnacious to an astonishing degree. Like some of Cooper's figures, they seem to ache for want of a fight. And, yet, back of this virile roughness is the tender and beautiful story of love, while everywhere is a strange mingling of wildness and refinement.

Most critics now consider *Horse-Shoe Robinson* the greatest novel written in the South before the war. Centering about the battle of King's Mountain, it shows in Horse-Shoe the type of men who won the famous victory and, at the same time, gives that local tone and sentiment which no mere book of history, though written by a master-hand, can ever impart. The final chapter is a description of the battle itself: and here, plainly, is genius. Seldom indeed has a better climax been written by any American; for here the historic, the romantic, and the dramatic merge into a powerful effort. To the lover of Addison and Steele *Swallow Barn* should appeal with peculiar force; Sir Roger de Coverley seems among us again. Indeed the influence of the eighteenth century essay and novel of manners is strikingly evident. Quaint humor, happy descriptions, and the quietness, contentment, and charitableness of the old English knight are here; while the details so noticeable in a peaceful life are por-

trayed with lingering touches. Notice a few lines from a description of the country gentleman:

"The master of this lordly domain is Frank Meriwether. He is now in the meridian of life—somewhere about forty-five. Good cheer and an easy temper tell well upon him. The first has given him a comfortable, portly figure, and the latter a contemplative turn of mind, which inclines him to be lazy and philosophical. . . .

"It is pleasant to see him when he is going to ride to the Court House on business occasions. He is then apt to make his appearance in a coat of blue broadcloth, astonishingly glossy, and with an unusual amount of plaited ruffle, strutting through the folds of a Marseilles waistcoat. A worshipful finish is given to this costume by a large straw hat lined with green silk. There is a majestical fulness in his garments which betokens condition in the world, and a heavy bunch of seals, suspended by a chain of gold, jingles as he moves, pronouncing him a man of superfluities. . . .

"I am told he keeps the peace as if he commanded a garrison, and administers justice like a Cadi. . . . He has some claim to supremacy in this last department; for during three years he smoked segars in a lawyer's office in Richmond, which enabled him to obtain a bird's-eye view of Blackstone and the Revised Code. Besides this he was a member of a Law Debating Society, which ate oysters once a week in a cellar; and he wore, in accordance with the usage of the most prominent law students of that day, six cravats, one over the other, and yellow topped boots, by which he was recognized as a blood of the metropolis. Having in this way qualified himself to assert and maintain his rights, he came to his estate, upon his arrival at age, a very model of landed gentleman."

Such was the Virginian of early days. Again, note the beauty of the home-life:

"It is refreshing to behold how affectionately vain our good hostess is of Frank, and what deference she shows to him in all matters, except those that belong to the home department; for there she is confessedly and without appeal, the paramount power. . . . Frank, in return, is a devout admirer of her accomplishments, and, although he does not pretend to have an ear for music, he is in raptures at her skill on the harpsichord, . . . and he sometimes set her to singing 'The Twins of Latona' and 'Old Towler,' and 'The Rose-Tree in Full Bearing' (she does not study the modern music), for the entertainment of his company. On these occasions, he stands by the instrument and nods his head, as if he comprehended the airs."

Such portrayals are the strength of great writing. The homely life, the familiar characters, the quaint customs, the unrestrained freedom of environments, the far-reaching forests, the winding roads, and everywhere the tinge of romance—these are sources of power. The stories are not without their faults. They are prolix; they perhaps take too long to unwind the slender cord of their plots; yet how interesting are the many diversions. Here, in fact, is an author who by his genius might have founded in those days before the Great Struggle a strong school of Southern novelists. "Might have founded" are the only words we may use; for with the approach of the mighty conflict, the intellect thrust aside fiction for realities, and the power that might have created romance was needed in the world of facts. In Kennedy, however, we find one who had done his work largely before the actual beginning of that strife, and therefore, the struggle for recog-

nition was easier; his followers, such as William Gilmore Simms and John Esten Cooke, succeeded *in spite* of the great upheaval.

X

William Gilmore Simms — (1806-1870)

Versatility is one of the bitterest enemies of real greatness. For Genius is composed largely of concentrated energy. And yet in spite of the fact that William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870) was lawyer, planter, statesman, editor, novelist, dramatist, critic, biographer, historian, and poet, he narrowly missed being great. He deserved that greatly abused phrase, "a self-made man." Shortly after his birth at Charleston, his mother died, and his father being called away to fight the Seminoles, he was left under the care of a loving but very poverty-stricken grandmother. Necessarily his scholastic training was extremely limited, and at an early age he left school to become a clerk in a drug-store. But he was a precocious boy, who, at the age of seven, had written some surprising verse, and, with ambition aroused, he took up the study of law at eighteen, and divided his time between Blackstone and poetic efforts.

At nineteen he had published his *Monody on Pinckney,* and by the time he had reached twenty-one, he had given up all thoughts of law and had begun the remarkably productive career that continued until his death in 1870. Volume after volume came forth from his pen; numerous literary journals were established under his leadership; struggling writers without number received his sympathy and advice; and to a great extent through his endeavors Charleston became in his day a center of culture.

"Legaré's wit and scholarship," says Margaret J. Preston, "brightened its social circle; Calhoun's deep shadow loomed over it from his plantation at Fort Hill, Gilmore Simms's genial culture broadened its sympathies. The latter was the Mæcenas to a band of brilliant youths who used to meet for literary suppers at his beautiful home." At twenty-three he became editor of the Charleston *City Gazette,* but four years later the venture failed; for Simms had had the boldness to oppose, in a section even then called "the hotbed of secession," the disunion tendencies of the citizens.

He found himself reduced to poverty, and thus his literary efforts now possessed an additional incentive. The rapidity with which he turned out every kind of literature was a matter of wonder. By 1860 he had written eighteen volumes of poetry and more than sixty volumes of history, criticism, and romance; and yet but one or two of these many efforts sank to the level of mediocrity. Gradually his persistent endeavors lifted him out of his impoverished state, and when he married, as his second wife, the daughter of a wealthy planter and thus came into possession of the beautiful estate, "Woodlands," he for a time was relieved from the unremitting struggle for the bare necessities of life. He took part in the public movements of his native city and State, served several terms in the legislature, and gave of his talent and means, for many forms of philanthropy. But the dark days of war came; his sympathy was with the South; his beautiful home was almost ruined; and again he found himself in poverty. Yet with the same brave spirit as urged on the indomitable Scott, he wrote more desperately, and for five years after the conflict he continued the arduous labor. Rest came at last on June 11, 1870, and he was buried in Magnolia Cemetery in that city which he loved so much.

Simms was a man of surprisingly broad culture. Though his knowledge along some lines was rather elemental, owing to his limited opportunities in youth, he was really learned in literature. His editions of classic dramas, with notes, are good, while his literary criticisms and book-reviews show a wide range of reading and a knowledge of the best. And what a great heart was his! His sympathy seemed boundless, and many a successful writer held him in grateful memory for practical favors in times of distress. Indeed, by his aid to Paul Hamilton Hayne and Henry Timrod, he deserves the loving remembrance not only of the South but of all America. In magazine work he seemed never to be discouraged, and though periodicals failed with what may truthfully be called "periodical" regularity, he was ever found willing to devote his time, his energy, and even his means to such endeavors. Few examples of such disinterestedness and sacrificing zeal can be discovered in the history of any literature.

Simms was a poet before he attempted novel-writing. As we have seen, he published his *Monody on the Death of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney* when he was but nineteen, and seven years later (1832) his *Atalantis,* brought out by Harper's, was one of the most widely discussed poems of the day. In 1829 there had appeared his *Vision of Cortes, Cain, and Other Poems;* the next year *The Tricolor, or Three Days of Blood* was published; and thus the stream flowed on with great regularity until 1867, when he brought out *War Poetry of the South.* A collective edition appeared in 1864, and from time to time, until death came, he added stanzas to his already immense quantity of verse.

His poetry is seldom without a distinct element of beauty. Lacking, for the most part, in profound thought and deep passion, it has a facile vigor of

expression and an ever-present seriousness of purpose. Frequently the note of sadness is present.

"Even Rapture's song hath evermore a tone
Of wailing, as for bliss too quickly gone.
The hope most precious is the soonest lost,
The flower most sweet is first to feel the frost.
Are not all short-lived things the loveliest?
And like the pale star, shooting down the sky,
Look they not even brightest, as they fly
From the lone sphere they blest?"

His was an aptitude for many moods and forms of verse. In *The Lost Pleiad,* from which the above lines are taken, we find the lingering music that made his work so often an artistic delight; yet note the swinging vigor of *The Swamp Fox:*

"We follow where the Swamp Fox guides,
His friends and merry men are we;
And when the troop of Tarleton rides,
We burrow in the cypress tree.
The turfy hammock is our bed,
Our home is in the red deer's den,
Our roof the tree-top overhead;
For we are wild and hunted men."

The true poetic qualities, romance, mystery, and wonder, are never lacking. Whether the subject be the grapevine swing of his childhood,

"Lithe and long as the serpent train,
Springing and clinging from tree to tree,
Now darting upward, now down again,
With a twist and a twirl that are strange to see."

or the poet's visions of the mysteries that

"Flash forever,
In evening shades, these glimpses strange and sweet,
They fill his heart betimes,—they leave him never,
And haunt his steps with sounds of falling feet."

these three characteristics just mentioned lend an additional charm. But the profound depths of

thought and passion are not reached by Simms. True, he at times utters thoughts not unworthy of the great masters, as when he says,

"This the true sign of ruin to a race—
It undertakes no march, and day by day,
Drowses in camp, or, with the laggard's pace,
Walks sentry o'er possessions that decay;
Destined, with sensible waste, to fleet away;—
For the first secret of continued power
Is the continued conquest;—all our sway
Hath surety in the uses of the hour;
If that we waste, in vain walled town and lofty bower."

But such examples of depth are entirely too few to entitle him to the name of a great poet. Mere skill and music do not make one; mighty, soul-arousing themes, thoughts, and emotions are necessary; and these were not often within the scope of Simms. As a poet, therefore, he probably is not destined to possess permanent fame.

It is as a novelist that the man's power is best shown. Though his work is often hasty, unpolished, and sometimes inexcusably careless, the strength of his imagination and the easy vigor of his expression save the multitude of his stories from weakness and imitativeness. "He possessed immense fertility, a vivid imagination, a true realistic handling of whatever he touched." Frequently he has been spoken of as "the Cooper of the South"; but the title is hardly fair to Simms; for, though not such a master of plot and action as that inventive Northerner, he greatly surpassed Cooper in culture, knowledge of literature, broadness of view, and poetic sentiment. Yet, without doubt, he was a disciple of Cooper. All of his novels have the same rapidity and vigor of plot, the same romance and excitement, the same love of the wild woods, the Indian, the chase, and the hair-breadth escape. The most noted of his fictions deal indeed with somewhat the same period

in American history: *The Yemassee,* telling of early colonial days; *The Partisan, Mellichampe,* and *Katharine Walton,* dealing with the time of the Revolution; *Eutaw, The Scout, Forayers,* and *Woodcraft,* having their actions in the last years of the eighteenth century; and *Wigwam and Cabin,* showing the frontier life of the opening days of the nineteenth century.

In all of these Simms shows that he can tell a story well. Compared with the high literary polish, the sparseness of details in producing an effect, and the accurate construction of plot in more modern fiction, these novels may seem prolix and loose; but despite the diffusiveness of words, there is a saving virility and a sweep of action, compelling admiration. There is many an exciting movement in these old-time stories. Simms uses the same tricks of the trade as Scott and Cooper,—the long hours of waiting, the presence of death, the hidden paths, the apathy brought on by despair, the rescue party, and the many other devices that make the reader hold his breath and wonder how it all will end. But unlike Cooper, he depicts woman as a being of some strength and spirit. They sometimes fight in the battles; and by their ingenuity perform important work. For instance, in *The Yemassee,* a soldier's wife, by holding an Indian poised in a high window in such a manner that the other savages cannot enter without killing him, saves all her companions. And the love affairs of the heroes and heroines, as portrayed by Simms, are more natural and more "weakly human" than in Cooper.

Again, Simms can create an atmosphere and a background in a most effective manner. Preserving the traditions of his native State in a beautiful form, he does no less for the noble scenery of the Southeast. He can take in at one sweep the many wonders

in the vast wilderness of an unexplored continent, and, seizing upon the salient points, he preserves in the strange scene much of its rugged grandeur. Portions of his *Guy Rivers,* translated into German, were praised abroad as the finest descriptions of American scenery ever written; and yet *Guy Rivers* is by no means the greatest of his novels. "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country."

Versatile, enthusiastic, industrious, interested in all human affairs, and acquainted with the best in literature and art, Simms knew what should be written, but had not the patience to labor for perfection. Haste and slovenliness too often appeared where glittering, polished, artistic effects might have made a masterpiece. But despite his many defects, we have in him the most gifted man of letters, save Poe, in the ante-bellum South.

And with Simms we must leave, for a time, the fiction writers of the South. In the next period we shall find a few worthy novelists, but the roar of cannon and the moan of the dying suddenly silenced the voices of many, and when the strife was past, a seemingly ruined country offered them but poor inducements for imaginative flights. Yet, we shall find some rising from the ashes and telling in a sadder yet, perhaps, nobler tone, the stories of struggles and self-victories.

POETRY

Their name is legion—these verse-writers of the South; but of true poets, how few! For the writing of poetry has rarely been considered a very serious business. Rather, it has been regarded as Paul Hamilton Hayne declared all literary efforts among Southerners have been regarded, as "the choice

recreation of gentlemen, as something fair and good, to be courted in a dainty amateur fashion." In consequence, during the ante-bellum period, the efforts, with only a few exceptions, had not the sustained character, the deep thought, the great passion of masterpieces. Of fairly good singers there were many; but the few who were of genuine power stood isolated, each a distinct personality, possessing little in common with any other poet or poets. The poetry of a theory or dogma, then, gained no headway in the South; none of the singers climbed Parnassus,

"With a whole bale of isms tied together with rime."

Theirs is a poetry of emotions, and love is, for the most part, the inspiring theme.

Technically the poetry of these writers is good, in many cases surprisingly good, and the music and rhythm and general artistic tone compare well with the best written in America. For, of course, being a poetry of emotion, it is largely lyric verse; and the "inevitable" study of the ancient classics had taught extreme carefulness in the choice of words and sentiments. Therefore we shall find amidst a fair amount of rubbish not a few dainty gems. Toward the close of this period the more sincere writers began to feel deeply the shadow cast upon their section and to note with dread the approach of war, and, as a result of the sudden outburst of political and sectional fervor, there came a number of thrilling and effective lyrics. But the earlier verse has little of this or any other form of vigorous purpose. Its reason for existence lies in its portrayal of a momentary emotion or in its appeal to the sense of melody.

However lacking in certain qualities these efforts may have been, they were all thoroughly American,

and the majority thoroughly Southern in their general tone and flavor. There were few if any references to the nightingale and other creatures unknown to America; but, on the other hand, the mockingbird, the whippoorwill, the orange tree, the palmetto and the pine received due homage. The greater poets were intense lovers of Nature, and, like that Nature which the luxuriant South knows, their poems possess a sense of warmth, freshness, and color. Considering the discouraging circumstances, the poetry of the Southern States became all that could be expected. In any land it has ever been considered folly to attempt to live by poetry; but in the South it was more than folly. The section had no great publishing houses; the scattered reading population, contented in its conservatism, spent what time it could spare from law and politics, on the older classics; and no cult nor school called to its aid the singers of the land. Seeing but dimly the perilous lassitude into which their customs and institutions had beguiled them, the people drifted on toward the whirlpool of war. Yet, genius in some measure compelled opportunity, and the spirit of song at least *existed,* if it did not *thrive.* A few strong voices sang with beauty, showing what music the folk might have produced in better days.

I

Plantation Melodies

Doubtless the most spontaneous outburst of song known to modern days is found in the plantation melodies of the American negro. Unfortunately for our poetry at least, the United States sprang into existence, a civilized, intelligent, prosaic nation, almost entirely devoid of the national body of folk-lore which every great European people con-

siders a priceless treasure of antiquity. And in the years which have followed that sudden appearance of a new commonwealth there have been among the whites—with the possible exception of a few ballads found among the mountaineers of Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina—no melodies unique and springing from the people. The conditions that led to an *Iliad,* a *Beowulf,* a *Nibelungen Lied,* a *Song of Roland,* an *Arthurian Legend* or a *Robin Hood Ballad* have never been present to bring forth a song of America's birth and childhood. Of all the builders of the nation the negro alone has created a species of lyric verse that all the world may recognize as a distinctly American production.

The black man is undoubtedly the best *natural* musician and orator among modern peoples. Under the stress of religious emotion the most illiterate of their preachers may startle the listener by a wonderful power in word-painting, while their ear for music is so true as to enable them to form without a moment's hesitation correct harmonies for almost any melody. Song is to them the very soul of life; it is an ever-present companion; it is a helper in toil, a pastime in idleness, a comforter in times of sorrow. Sometimes amidst the city's hurrying throng a long line of negroes may be seen silently and doggedly working on the track or in the trench. Suddenly above the multitudinous sounds of the quivering street there will burst forth a strange great chord like the peal of a mighty organ; scores take it up, a hundred, five hundred, all along the far-stretched line of bended backs; and, as the picks clink and the shovels grate, a chorus is lifted that carries the soul far away from the hot walls and echoing pavements. How strange, how weird is that harmony, so unmodern, so redolent of an age long past! And down on the gray, sweltering dock and far away at

the cabin door by the cotton-field, the same melodies are arising—the folk-songs of a people united by their love of music. Suddenly, while the soul is in the midst of such meditations, the chorus ceases, and once more the listening ear hears among the babel of sounds, the clink of the picks and the grating of the shovels.

Perhaps the song was some mournful refrain bearing the memories of a pagan religion of fear:

"I am sinking,
I am sinking,
I am sinking
Down in death!
Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy
On my soul!"

Perhaps it was the more triumphant theme of *Rol. Jordan, Roll:*

"My bruddah sitting on de tree of life
An' he hyeah when Jordan roll.
Roll, Jordan,
Roll, Jordan,
Roll, Jordan, roll:
Oh, march de angel march,
O my soul, rise in Heaven, Lord,
For to hyeah when Jordan roll!"

Again, it may have been that crooning lyric, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* with its drawn-out refrain:

"Oh, de good ole chariot swing so low,
I don't want to leave me behine,
Oh, swing low, sweet chariot,
Swing low, sweet chariot,
I don't want to leave me behine."

But whatever the song, there is ever a quaintness, a sense of something not belonging to this age and place,—a something that fills the unfamiliar listener

with an emotion of pity. In the words, indeed, the melody may be a reckless, rollicking one, such as the old *Savannah Freeman's Song:*

"Heave away, heave away:
I'd rathah court a yellow gal than work fah Henry Clay:
Heave away, heave away!
Yellow gal, I want to go,
I'd rathah court a yellow gal than work fah Henry Clay!"

But the minor key so suggestive of mourning, and the weird ending, ceasing, as it always does, on just the note least expected and thus causing us to wait involuntarily for the next,—these turn every song into a thing of strange pathos.

However, the theme is seldom of such a rollicking nature as that in the example just given. Religion has been the most fascinating subject that ever held the attention of the black man; and to the ante-bellum negro, especially, it constituted the ruling passion of life. The revival, the "protracted meeting," the soul-terrifying conviction of sin, the shouting conversion, and the religious trance were to him, never shams and hypocrisies, but rapturous realities. But even here sadness prevails:

"Bending knees aching, body racked with pain,
I wish I was a chile of God, I'd git home bimeby!
Keep praying, I do believe,
We're a long time wagging o'er de crossing;
Keep praying, I do believe,
We'll git home to heaven bimeby!"

Again, notice the cheerful conception of death in such lines as these:

"No mo' peck of corn fah me,
No mo'; no mo';
No mo' peck of corn fah me,
Many thousand go!

"No mo' auction-block fah me,
No mo'; no mo';
No mo' auction-block fah me,
Many thousand go!"

And what longing for Heaven—the old-time bejeweled, glittering, material Heaven — found expression in these rude chants! As with all primitive races, the Scriptural figures of speech are taken literally, and the home over yonder is a place of surprising wealth.

"I ain't been thah,
But I've been tole
(Histe the window, let the dove come in!)
The gates am pearl,
The streets am gole,
(Histe the window, let the dove come in!)"

Heaven is also a land of meetings of eternal union with loved ones:

"I have a fathah ovah yondah,
I have a fathah ovah yondah,
I have a fathah ovah yondah,
Way ovah in de promise' lan'!
Bimeby I'll go to see him,
Bimeby I'll go to see him,
Bimeby I'll go to see him,
Way ovah thah!"

And thus the family death-record continues until the mother, sisters, brothers, wives, sons, daughters, and sometimes even the nephews and cousins have been remembered aloud.

Judgment Day was the inexhaustible subject of the ante-bellum negro exhorter, and, once under its influence, his imagination ran riot. The thunder of Gabriel's trumpet resounded; the lightning flashed; the moon and the stars turned to blood; the sun went out; the earth shriveled as a parchment; and the dead of all ages arose and walked in their funeral shrouds. In all seriousness some of the sermons on this subject as preached by negroes even of the twentieth century are so startlingly vivid as to compel sympathy with the groaning and hysterical audience. In speaking thus of the sermons, we likewise describe the songs of resurrection.

"Gabriel, blow youah trumpet,
Lord, how loud will I blow it?
Loud as seven peals of thundah,
Wake de sleeping nations,
Den you see po' sinnahs rising,
See de dry bones a-creeping,
In dat great gitting-up morning.
Fare you well! Fare you well!"

It is a time of tumult. Phrases must express the meaning of whole sentences:

"In de morning,
In de morning,
Chil'en? Yes, my Lord!
Don't you hyeah de trumpet sound?
If I had a-died when I was young,
I nevah would had de race fah to run.
Don't you hyeah de trumpet sound?"

Such were the melodies born of slavery. In them are the heart-cries of a nation living under a cloud, the vague, half-conscious gropings for something unattained. The note of sadness is sincere. Here is indeed little of the character found in the counterfeit "coon-song" so popular in these first years of the twentieth century; the two are not of the same spirit. Nor are the beautiful lyrics, *Suwanee Ribber, Old Kentucky Home,* and others composed through the art of the white man, in the same class as the real plantation songs. In their half-expressed thoughts, their minor keys, their swaying rhythm, and their unexpected endings, they are absolutely unique; they defy imitation; and musical instruments founded upon the prevailing tonic scale cannot repeat their harmonies. They seem destined, therefore, to perish with their quaint and melodious singers. In them America has had a rich but now, alas, surely vanishing treasure.

II

John Shaw — (1778-1809)

At the very beginning of this period (1810) there appeared a little volume entitled simply *Poems*. The author, Dr. John Shaw (1778-1809), had died just a few months before; else it is probable that these verses would never have been published. For Shaw was an extremely modest man, busy with his professional work, and the poetry that he composed in his moments of recreation, he would never, under any pretext, send forth for publication. And, yet, though Duyckinck thinks that "they are of the average order of excellence," some few of them have a most happy sentiment and a more than excellent lyric quality.

Concerning Shaw little is now known. He was born at Annapolis, Maryland, studied at St. John's College in that city, and took a course in medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1798 he was a surgeon on the United States fleet off the coast of Algiers, and three years later we find him again taking a course in medicine, this time at the University of Edinburgh. He went to Baltimore in 1805, and there during the next three years gained local fame not only as a highly successful physician, but as a disinterested public citizen. And yet, turning from the matter-of-fact, practical affairs in which his time was so fully occupied, he found opportunity to write such dainty verses as those in his well-known *Song*.

"Who has robbed the ocean cave,
To tinge thy lips with coral hue?
Who from India's distant wave
For thee those pearly treasures drew?
Who from yonder orient sky,
Stole the morning of thine eye?
. . . . . .

"But one charm remains behind,
Which mute earth can ne'er impart:
Nor in ocean wilt thou find,
Nor in the circling air, a heart.
Fairest: wouldst thou perfect be,
Take, oh take that heart from me."

In the *Sleighing Song* we find the same melodious expression and daintiness of sentiment:

"When calm is the night, and the stars shine bright,
The sleigh glides smooth and cheerily;
And mirth and jest abound,
While all is still around,
Save the horses' trampling sound
And the horse-bells tinkling merrily."

In Shaw this period of Southern poetry had a fairly auspicious opening. But the same causes that restrained him in his poetic efforts—lack of serious purpose and failure to consider poetry worthy of life-long consecration, restrained many of his followers, and the amateur spirit, a passive but none the less destructive enemy of great poetry, continued to hold back the singers from lofty heights of passion.

III

William Munford — (1775-1825)

Another careful and melodious, if not inspired, poet of the earliest days of the period was William Munford (1775-1825). His father, Robert Munford, had been something of an author, having written two dramatic compositions, *The Candidate* and *The Patriots,* and several Revolutionary songs; and the boy was fortunate in possessing as a father such a lover of literature. Being a native of Virginia, he naturally became a student at William and Mary College, and, after graduating, just as naturally studied law and drifted into politics. He became a member of the

Virginia House of Delegates, was a State senator from 1801 to 1808, and shortly afterwards obtained the clerkship of the House of Delegates and held it during the remainder of his life. For many years he was also reporter of the decisions of the Supreme Court of Appeals in Virginia and had as one of his duties the dry and arduous task of preparing each year the bulky volumes of these decisions.

Such is the prosaic history of the "bread and butter" phase of his life, and the biography of his intellectual and æsthetic life is just as uneventful. From time to time he wrote verse, but he made no effort to give it publicity; and his last work, a composition which in some parts indeed approaches greatness, was not published until more than twenty years after his death. This is his blank verse translation of the *Iliad* (1825), brought out in book form in 1846. Here is no mere passing of words from one language to another; the poetry seems original and spontaneous. Vigor, picturesqueness, vividness of description are obtained by use of an idiomatic English that smacks not at all of Hellenic effects. Note the portions dealing with the triumph of Hector; there is no strain, no affectation; only the rugged force of the original:

"Hector seized
And bore a stone which stood before the gates,
Heavy and craggy, pointed sharp at top,
Which not two men, though stoutest of the race
Earth now sustains, could without toil have moved
By levers from the ground and heaved its mass
Into a wagon; yet did singly he
Toss it with ease, so light Saturnian Jove
Made it to him! For as a shepherd brings
In one hand joyfully, a ram's rich fleece,
And feels but small the weight, so Hector bore
That rock enormous towards the lofty gates,
Strong-framed, with double valves, of panels thick,
Compact and firm, two iron bars within
Transverse secured them, fastened by a bolt,
He near them took his stand, with legs astride,

That not in vain that weapon should be thrown;
Then smote them in the midst with all his strength,
And broke both hinges. Thundering on, the stone,
With force o'erwhelming, fell within the wall.
Loud rang the yielding gates, asunder riven,
Nor could the bars retain them; flew the planks
In splintered fragments scattered every way.
Into the pass illustrious Hector leaped!"

Lines of considerable power, all must admit, and yet the people of the South allowed a translator of such artistic ability to pass practically unknown and finally to sink almost into oblivion. The New England States have nursed genius of much less promise and gained treasures. But comparisons, it is said, are odious.

IV

Francis Scott Key — (1780-1843)

Occasionally it happens that fame of lasting character comes to a man through one small literary production. The writing of *America* raised the commonplace name of its author, Smith, to a permanent eminence. *Home, Sweet Home* will ever keep the name, John Howard Payne, fresh; *The Old Oaken Bucket* is sufficient to lift Woodworth from oblivion; *Dixie* has saved Daniel Emmett from a like fate; and *Hail Columbia* will be remembered long after everything else that Joseph Hopkinson wrote has been forgotten. It is so with Francis Scott Key (1780-1843). Born in Frederick county, Maryland, he was educated at St. John's College, Annapolis, became a lawyer, secured the office of attorney for the District of Columbia, and, but for one small accident, might have served his day of quiet industry and passed out of the memory of men. An unforeseen delay of a few hours made him famous.

It happened that at the attack on Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor (1814), Key went on board a British vessel to arrange for an exchange of prisoners; and there, in the transaction of business, night came upon him unawares. The attack was soon to begin, and it was considered expedient for the American to remain on board. All that long night the battle waged and amid the smoke and turmoil Key strove in vain to discover how the tide of fortune was moving. Hour after hour passed, and still no hint as to whether friend or enemy was conqueror. But morning came, and there, high above the fort, waved the American flag. Key was thrilled with patriotic joy. Seizing an old envelope, he wrote that oft-sung question:

"Oh! say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the clouds of the fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?"

Under the overwhelming impulse of the moment, the other lines quickly followed, and thus one of the noblest of America's patriotic songs was written. Francis Scott Key wrote other poems; in fact, a volume of rather pretentious size, with an introduction by Chief Justice Taney, was published in 1857; but the poet wrote but one great song. It is sufficient. He who creates one lyric that a nation sings into its very soul, has done a glorious life-work.

V

It is easy to see that from such writers as these a great poetry could not arise. Literature was not a serious enough business with them; it was not a life-directing force; it was too often a pleasant means of exhibiting culture. That a man might devote

years to the production of a majestic epic, as Milton did, or to the Tennysonian task of retelling a nation's legends or to probing deep into the motives of a man's deeds, as Browning sought to do, was a conception of a life-work acknowledged as noble, but yet not possessing sufficient charm to attract the amateur verse-writer of the South.

We have another example of this kind of poet in William Maxwell, lawyer, educator, editor, and verse-writer. He was born at Norfolk, Virginia, in 1784, was educated at Yale, and, not having the proper tendency toward medicine or theology, necessarily became a lawyer. Following the usual course of a successful Virginia lawyer of that day, he became in time a member of the Virginia legislature. From 1838 to 1844 he was president of Hampden-Sidney College, and for several years was editor of the *Virginia Historical Register*. He died at Richmond in 1857.

William Maxwell — (1784-1857)

Such, with a change in the location, might be the biography of many a Southern writer of ante-bellum days; and of a similar character likely would be the literary productions of the many. For in Maxwell's poems we find the neatness, the conciseness, the daintiness that are found to more or less extent in the magazine verse of the opening years of the twentieth century. *To Anne* is a good example:

"How many kisses do I ask?
Now you set me to my task.
First, sweet Anne, will you tell me
How many waves are in the sea?
How many stars are in the sky?
How many lovers you make sigh?
How many sands are on the shore?
I shall want just one kiss more."

Another typical specimen is *To a Fair Lady:*

"Fairest, mourn not for thy charms,
Circled by no lover's arms,
While inferior belles you see
Pick up husbands merrily."

Need we give the remainder of the selection? Such verse is not without entertaining powers; it is just what one wishes for an idle hour; and when these things are said all is said. It lacks the profound seriousness of great poetry. Often indeed we may be obliged, in justice, to use the same words concerning poems to follow.

VI

Richard Dabney — (1787-1825)

In the works of Richard Dabney (1787-1825), however, we have a notable exception. Here is something of real genius,—a quality often surprising in its excellence, a general up-lift of tone, bespeaking a genuine poetic temperament. He, too, was a Virginian, having been born of a family very important in the intellectual history of that State; but owing to the fact that there were twelve children in the household, the boy did not have those early educational advantages which a member of such a family would be supposed to possess. However, at sixteen, he began the study of the classics, and read with such zeal and understanding that before he had reached manhood he was considered a very good instructor in such subjects. In his twenty-third year, at the very time when his brilliant intellect was gaining recognition, his whole life was blasted by injuries received in the burning of a Richmond theatre; and from this time until his death he was a being devoid of determined effort, and utterly unfit to cope with the world. He took opium to relieve his suffering.

and became a slave to the drug. In his despair he drowned care in drink and during the last years of his life was scarcely ever entirely sober.

For a time he worked in Philadelphia and while there is thought to have written the greater part of *The Olive Branch; or Faults on Both Sides,* a satire showing the defects of both Federalists and Republicans. He at length returned to his birthplace, and there, in his efforts to teach, divided his time rather equally between the school-house, the inn, and his books. Thus passed the remaining years of his life.

But we do not study a poet because of his life; we study him because he has said something supremely well. From this point of view Richard Dabney is worthy of much notice. For, disappointing and desolate as was his mere existence, his works are deserving of a wider reading than they are now receiving. His first volume, *Poems Original and Translated,* was published at Richmond in 1812; and, although the book contained meritorious work, it failed so dismally of popularity that Dabney endeavored to suppress it. But, in 1815, he published at Philadelphia an enlarged edition showing such scholarship and such ability in artistic expression that it compelled attention. The poems indicated a proficiency in Latin, Greek, and Italian; for in these pages Euripides, Sappho, Seneca, Petrarch, and others spoke with a vigor rather rare in translations.

Dabney seems to have been imbued with the spirit of the ancient classic literature, particularly with the spirit of the shorter poems of the more "human" of the early writers. In *An Epigram Imitated from Archias,* for instance, this love and understanding and power of entering into the spirit of an author may be discerned:

> "Life, faithless and treach'rous, is forever presenting
> To our view flying phantoms we never can gain;
> Life, cruel and tasteless, is forever presenting
> All our joys, and involving our pleasures in pain.

"Death, kind and consoling, comes calmly and lightly,
The balm of all sorrow, the cure of all ill;
And after a pang, that but thrills o'er us slightly,
All then becomes tranquil, all then becomes still."

As an original poet, he shows not a little of the classical carefulness and finish. Note the closing lines of *Youth and Age:*

"Its gentle beams on man's last days,
The Hesperus of life displays:
When all of passion's mid-day heat
Within the breast forgets to beat;
When calm and smooth our minutes glide
Along life's tranquillizing tide,
It points with slow, receding light
To the sweet rest of silent night;
And tells, when life's vain schemes shall end;
Thus will its closing light descend,
And as the eve star seeks the wave,
Thus gently reach the quiet grave."

What Richard Dabney might have done had a noble manner of living been his, must remain merely a matter of conjecture; but the productions of his limited, restless, and dissipated days are full of promise of what might have been. Of all the Southern poets before the Civil War, a very few surpassed him in a conception of what constitutes true poetry and in the ability to write finished, elegant verse.

VII

Richard Henry Wilde — (1789-1847)

A poet possessing less genius but more fame than the unfortunate Dabney was Richard Henry Wilde (1789-1847). It was by the merest chance that he came to be classed among American writers, or among Americans at all; for he was born at Dublin, Ireland, and spent the first eight years of his life in that city. But his father was a believer in Irish liberty and during the troublesome days of

1797 expressed his opinions so openly that he was compelled to give up his business enterprises and hasten, with his family, to America. Going to Baltimore, the father there struggled with adversities for five years and then died, leaving his family almost destitute. The son found work in a dry-goods store in Augusta, Georgia, and in time, having prospered, he established a business of his own, and brought his mother to that city. That mother was an inspiration to the boy. She was well educated, a lover of literature, and, in an unambitious way, something of a poet. During the seven years of the boy's life as a store-keeper, she constantly encouraged him to strive for something higher; and, fortunately, that higher ideal was to be an educated man. He studied intensely and read widely. At eighteen he began a course in law; at twenty (1809) he was admitted to the bar. The nobility of his character is shown in the fact that he went to another county to take the examination, lest a possible failure might distress his mother. His health now began to fail, and he was obliged to give up his arduous study and seek recreation more extensively in social life. But his energetic spirit saved him from idleness. He entered politics, became Attorney-General of the State, was a member of the House of Representatives, and at the age of twenty-five was elected a member of Congress. This office he held, with but one exception, until 1834; but in that year, having become an opponent of Jackson's, he was defeated and was no longer a power in politics.

But his loss as a statesman was his gain as a writer. For, soon after his defeat, he went abroad and spent the greater part of the next seven years in southern Europe. During much of this time he resided at Florence, and there it was that he became

intensely interested in the illustrious Italian poet, Tasso. A great deal has been written concerning the strange life of that eccentric man, and Wilde, having entered zealously into the subject, collected most valuable material in his two-volume work, *Conjectures and Researches concerning the Love, Madness, and Imprisonment of Tasso.* Another act of his, which should have brought upon him the blessing of all Italy, was his recovery of the only portrait of Dante. The picture had been painted upon a wall, but for generations ignorant owners had repeatedly whitewashed the place until no trace of the likeness was visible. In his studies Wilde noted that once upon a time such a painting had been executed and, by careful removal of the layers of lime, he uncovered the treasure. It was during these years that he wrote a *Life of Dante*—which has not been published, however—and collected material for his essay on Petrarch. During all these years, also, he had been writing original or translated poems, and by the close of the period of foreign travel (1840) his name as an author was fairly well established.

Shortly after his return to America, he removed to New Orleans. He established there a large practice, and at the same time held the professorship of Constitutional Law in the University of Louisiana. He died of yellow fever, September 10, 1847, and his body was taken back to his Georgia home near Augusta and buried beside that of his little son. In later years the Hayne Society, a literary club of Augusta, removed the remains to Oakland Cemetery near the city, and there he now sleeps.

Personally he was an attractive man. Tall and graceful, with bright eyes and long black hair, he was a man to command attention immediately. And a closer acquaintance but heightened admiration;

for he seemed ever good-natured, quick, brilliant, willing to take and give repartee. Gentle in his nature, he made numerous friends and few enemies. As a writer, his fame rests largely on his work dealing with Tasso and on one poem, *My Life Is Like the Summer Rose.* Other verses by him are good, some few excellent, but none of them have the music and humanness of the one mentioned. He began an epic based on adventures that his brother experienced in Florida; but all that remains of the intended work is this short poem of six stanzas. Only by mischance and distinctly against his wish did it reach the public; but the praise received warranted the publication. Byron read it and immediately wrote Wilde a letter, calling the verses "the first poem of the century." The scholar, Anthony Barclay, translated it into Greek, and another scholar, mistaking it for an original ancient poem, wrote an article in the *North American Review,* accusing Wilde of plagiarism. Much discussion was aroused, and several years passed before the matter was made clear. Thus the poem was soon a widely known one, and among the sentimentally inclined the lines were often quoted:

"My life is like the summer rose,
That opens to the morning sky,
And ere the shades of evening close
Is scattered on the ground to die;
Yet on that rose's humble bed
The sweetest dews of night are shed,
As though she wept such waste to see;
But none shall weep a tear for me."

The poem has several beautiful ideas and sentiments artistically expressed; but that line repeated in one form or another at the end of each stanza—

"But none shall weep a tear for me"

is certainly a bit of affectation and sentimentality inexcusable according to more modern views. The same weakness is noticeable in others of his poems.

The *Ode to Ease,* telling in a most original manner the results of a choice between ease and industry, is good and more than good in the main; but the regret in it strikes the reader as somewhat oratorical and overwrought. Yet, it is not lacking in true poetic quality.

"I chose thee, Ease! and yet to me,
Coy and ungrateful thou hast proved,
Though I have sacrificed to thee
Much that was worthy to be loved.
But come again and I will yet
Thy past ingratitude forget.
Oh, come again! Thy witching powers
Shall claim my solitary hours!
With thee to cheer me, heavenly queen,
And conscience clear, and health serene,
And friends and books to banish spleen,
My life shall be as it has been,
A sweet variety of joys;
And glory's crown and beauty's smile,
And treasured hoards should seem the while
The idlest of all human toys."

In his *Farewell to America,* written on the occasion of his departure for Europe, we have a really good poem of patriotism, earnest and true in its sentiment:

"Farewell, my more than fatherland!
Home of my heart and friends, adieu!
Lingering beside some foreign strand,
How oft shall I remember you!
How often, o'er the waters blue,
Send back a sigh to those I leave,
The loving and beloved few,
Who grieve for me,—for whom I grieve!"

From the standpoint of naturalness and poetic appreciation of Nature and its creatures, his little poem, *To the Mocking Bird,* should rank high. Here is a certain intermingling of humor and seriousness that seems to agree most pleasantly with the subject. In the daytime the bird is a "motly fool:"

"Thine ever ready notes of ridicule
Pursue thy fellows still with jest and gibe."

He is indeed by day a "Yorick"; but when darkness comes he pours

> "a soft, sweet, pensive, solemn strain"

as though he would,

> "Like to the melancholy Jaques, complain,
> Musing on falsehood, folly, vice, and wrong."

But justice will not allow us a more prolonged study of Wilde. His were but partially accomplished possibilities. With the poetic nature, the inborn love of the best in literature, a perception of what is artistic, he yet failed of great results. We can but add him to the list of Southern men who wrote fairly well, but might have written splendidly if in their literary efforts they had been deeply in earnest. But we have seen how poetry was to them not a vocation but an avocation.

VIII

Along with these minor though sweet-voiced singers were a few strong voices singing the songs that in all the intervening years have not ceased to be considered treasures. Let us glance quickly at a few more of those who did "fairly" well and then turn to those who did extremely well.

Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar
—
(1798-1859)

Among these minor poets was MIRABEAU BUONAPARTE LAMAR (1798-1859). Born and reared at Louisville, Georgia, he was for some years a business man in that town. But, turning his attention to journalism, he became in 1828 editor of *The Columbus Inquirer,* an advocate of states'-rights. In 1835 he removed to Texas, fought in the battle of San Jacinto, and led the charge that gained the conflict.

Upon the establishment of the Republic of Texas, he served successively as attorney-general, secretary of war, vice-president, and president. He was appointed United States minister to Argentine Republic in 1857, but did not go to his post of duty; in 1858, however, he became minister resident at Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

Just the year before (1857), a small volume of his poetry had been printed under the title of *Verse Memorials,* and this, with an album of manuscript poetry which was never published, constitutes the sum total of his poetic endeavors. His verse shows qualities akin to those of such writers as Burns, Moore, and Hood in their lighter moments. Deep, mighty efforts were never his; but in his love lyrics there is a sentiment expressed in musical rhyme that is decidedly pleasing. In this form of song with its excusable license in the use of slightly strained descriptions and bold similes, a form that has been used so admirably among the Scotch and the Irish, Lamar was very much an adept. A stanza from *The Daughter of Mendoza* will illustrate this:

> "How brilliant is the morning star!
> The evening star how tender!
> The light of both is in her eye,
> Their softness and their splendor.
> But for the lash that shades their light,
> They are too dazzling for the sight;
> And when she shuts them, all is night—
> The daughter of Mendoza."

And in mentioning this poem we have mentioned his best one and the one that will longest be remembered.

IX

Another of these poets of the lighter vein was Edward Coate Pinkney (1802-1828); but in his verse he sometimes reached a height that, if attained often, might have placed him among the great singers. His father was the famous minister to the court of St. James, and thus it happened that the boy was born in London and spent the first eight years of his life in England. In 1811, however, he went to Baltimore and entered St. Mary's College, where he remained until he became a midshipman in the United States Navy, five years later. Much of his time as a seaman was spent in the Mediterranean, and often indeed may we see in his writings effects of the beautiful and romantic scenery of Italy.

Edward Coate Pinkney — (1802-1828)

> "It looks a dimple on the face of earth,
> The seal of beauty, and the shrine of mirth,
> Nature is delicate and graceful there,
> The place's genius feminine and fair:
> The winds are awed, nor dare to breathe aloud;
> The air seems never to have borne a cloud,
> Save where volcanoes send to heaven their curled
> And solemn smokes like altars of the world."

It was in Italy, too, that he wrote his morbid *Rodolph,* a poem in two cantos.

In 1822 he retired from the navy and, returning to Baltimore, began the study of law. The same year that he was admitted to the bar (1824) he married the lady to whom his well-known *Serenade* was addressed. He soon gave up the attempt to practise his profession, turned his attention to the study of literature, and in 1826 received the professorship of belles-lettres in the University of Maryland. At about the same time he became editor of *The Marylander* in Baltimore, and thus he

secured at length a work which gave him a fair income and an opportunity to exercise his talents. But by this time broken in health and with little desire to live, within two years he had fretted away his life.

At the time of his death this man of twenty-six was considered one of the "five greatest poets of the country"; but this was not necessarily a compliment. Great poets in America were even scarcer then than they are now. But Pinkney did have the combined fervor and carefulness of true genius. His felicity in lyric forms is not to be gainsaid. Such a song as *A Health* is one not to be forgotten in a day.

"I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair that, like the air,
'Tis less of earth than heaven."

Compare his *A Serenade* with the best lyrics of the same nature written by Longfellow, and the test will be little to the detriment of Pinkney.

"Sleep not:—thine image wakes for aye
Within my watching breast;
Sleep not: from her soft sleep should fly,
Who robs all hearts of rest.
Nay, lady, from thy slumbers break,
And make this darkness gay,
With looks whose brightness well might make
Of darker nights a day."

There is something above the ordinary in such verses, and they are fair specimens of his better work. His poems never fail to possess beauty of sentiment, technical excellence, smoothness, and grace. Nor is the all-pervading but elusive sadness so commonly

found in classic lyrics altogether absent here. Note but a stanza from one of the best poems that he wrote —*A Picture-Song:*

"The sportive hopes that used to chase
Their shifting shadows on,
Like children playing in the sun
Are gone—forever gone;
And on a careless, sullen peace,
My double-fronted mind,
Like Janus when his gates were shut
Looks forward and behind."

To be a good lyric-writer, the poet must have the exquisite power of blending varied sentiments. Is that power absent in these lines?

"We break the glass whose sacred wine
To some beloved health we drain,
Lest future pledges less divine,
Should e'er the hallowed toy profane;
And thus I broke a heart that poured
Its tide of feelings out for thee,
In draughts, by after times deplored,
Yet dear to memory."

Taking it all in all, here was a man who had the possibilities of literary greatness. In his one volume, *Poems: Rodolph, a Fragment, and Other Poems* (1825) there is more good work than in almost any collection of poetry brought out within the same decade, and this is particularly true as to the wholesomeness and strength of the sentiment and in the careful polish of the lines. *Rodolph,* however, is distinctly disappointing; its thoughts are morbid, unsafe; but the lyrics possess vitality and melody. They are spontaneous, unaffected, and idealistic in sentiment; and such qualities make a true song. Here, then, was material for the making of a poet. He was devoting much time to the study of literature; he was teaching the best in the world's writings; he might, in time, have come to possess the deep earnestness so sadly lacking in too many of the Southern writers. But *mors vincit omnia.*

X

George Denison Prentice — (1802-1870)

A man often heard of in ante-bellum days was George Denison Prentice (1802-1870). He was a Northerner by birth and early training, a Southerner by adoption and preference. Born at Preston, Connecticut, he was educated at Brown University, and, in the course of time having become a lawyer, in the course of more time gladly renounced the profession (1828). During the same year he founded at Hartford *The New England Review,* and after having brought it to a high state of efficiency he turned it over, in 1830, to Whittier, and came South. The purpose of this step was the collecting of material for a Life of Henry Clay, and Prentice fully intended to return soon to New England; but so interesting did he find the work and so pleasant the surroundings that he not only remained in the section, but, completely changing his political views, opposed from this time forth the principles of the Whig party.

Determining on Louisville as his home, he established there *The Journal* (afterwards *The Courier-Journal*), and soon made it a power in Southern political, educational, and social interests. Through it he encouraged many Southern writers and by word and deed at length made Louisville one of the literary centers of the section. But in spite of all his efforts and his interest in Southern movements, the effects of his early training remained with him, and when the Civil War came on he was a zealous opponent of secession, and, daily facing dangers and failures, remained loyal to the Union.

As a writer of prose he was witty, effective, and always interesting; as a poet he was serious, sombre,

and slightly affected. The collection entitled *Prenticeana* and his *Life of Clay* have had unnumbered readers, and deservedly so; for they both are, in their respective fields, brilliant pieces of work. But his poems, once so popular, are now falling into oblivion. Noble in sentiment, thoughtful, and eloquent, they are a little too declamatory to suit the taste of later readers. Note, for example, these lines from *The Flight of Years:*

> "'Tis the voice
> Of infant Freedom—and her stirring call
> Is heard and answered in a thousand tones
> From every hilltop of her western home—
> And lo—it breaks across old Ocean's flood—
> And *Freedom, Freedom!* is the answering shout
> Of nations starting from the spell of years."

This may have sounded grand in the ears of contemporary readers, but it sounds rather grandiloquent, if not bombastic, to us today. But many parts are not without a stern strength. His best known poem, *The Closing Year,* has at times something of the sombre reflection of Young's *Night Thoughts:*

> "'Tis a time
> For memory and for tears. Within the deep,
> Still chambers of the heart a spectre dim,
> Whose tones are like the wizard voice of Time,
> Heard from the tomb of ages, points its cold
> And solemn finger to the beautiful
> And holy visions that have passed away
> And left no shadow of their loveliness
> On the dead waste of life. That spectre lifts
> The coffin-lid of hope, and joy, and love,
> And bending mournfully above the pale,
> Sweet forms that slumber there, scatters dead flowers
> O'er what has passed to nothingness."

There are lines, too, of highly excellent quality in their kind,—the kind that overwhelms us in such

a poem as Bryant's *The Ages*. The last lines of *The Closing Year* illustrate it:

> "Time, the tomb-builder, holds his fierce career,
> Dark, stern, all pitiless, and pauses not
> Amid the mighty wrecks that strew his path,
> To sit and muse, like other conquerors,
> Upon the fearful ruin he has wrought."

Here indeed is an echo of the dignity, the sternness, and the sombreness of Bryant, but not the simplicity. Prentice might have taken one of his witticisms very seriously when he said: "The greatest truths are the simplest; the greatest men and women are sometimes so, too."

XI

Philip Pendleton Cooke — (1816-1850)

A name that for some time appeared regularly in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* and the *Southern Literary Messenger* was that of Philip Pendleton Cooke (1816-1850). He was a brother of John Esten Cooke, of whom as a novelist and essay-writer during a later period, we may justly take much notice. And if the poet had been as enthusiastic a poet as he was a Nimrod, he might have displayed a genius equal to that of his famous brother. But such a passion for hunting was his that business, social duties, and even bodily health were neglected; and finally death was caused by exposure while engaged in the chase. The history of his life is brief. Born at Martinsburg, Virginia, he was educated at Princeton, studied law and opened an office—where he was seldom seen. Literature and hunting henceforth occupied his time.

During his short life the only collection of his poems ever made was *Froissart Ballads, and Other Poems* (1847); but this does not by any means con-

tain all of his poetry. Though at his best in verse he was also a novelist, and his efforts along this line, such as *John Carpe, The Crime of Andrew Blair, The Gregories of Hackwood,* and *Chevalier Merlin* were very popular in his day. But, as has been mentioned, he is remembered because of his poetical work. Poe admired it, and, upon assuming the editorship of *The Gentleman's Magazine,* at once made him a regular contributor. Here appeared some of those poems the origin of which he explains in the quotation from an old Roman poet:

> "A certain freak has got into my head,
> Which I can't conquer for the life of me,
> Of taking of some history, little read,
> Or known, and writing it in poetry."

But above these narrative poems stand three or four love-lyrics, *Rosa Lee, To My Daughter Lily,* and those lines so often repeated by ante-bellum lovers—*Florence Vane:*

> "I loved thee long and dearly,
> Florence Vane;
> My life's bright dream and early,
> Hath come again;
> I renew, in my fond vision,
> My heart's dear pain,
> My hope and thy derision,
> Florence Vane.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Thou wast lovelier than the roses
> In their prime;
> Thy voice excelled the closes
> Of sweetest rhyme;
> Thy heart was a river
> Without a main.
> Would I had loved thee never,
> Florence Vane!"

XII

Severn Teackle Wallis — (1816-1894)

A man widely known in his own day but one seemingly almost forgotten now was Severn Teackle Wallis (1816-1894). And, yet, as lawyer, reformer, author, and poet, he was a worker, who, with great seriousness of purpose, gained results in many walks of life. His whole life centered about Baltimore; for he was born there, received his scholastic training at St. Mary's College in that city, studied law in the office of the famous William Wirt, and practised his profession there. He was in many ways an odd character, loving his home-life, though he was a bachelor, spending many hours a day among his books, but ever ready and able to go forth as a leader among men.

In 1847 he visited Spain and upon his return wrote his entertaining *Glimpses of Spain.* Four years before this he had been elected a corresponding member of the Spanish Royal Academy of History; and it was largely on account of his knowledge of Spanish institutions and customs that he was chosen by the Government in 1849 to examine the titles of East Florida lands lately purchased from Spain. The literary result of this trip was *Spain: Her Institutions, Politics, and Public Men.* During these years he had become noted for his independence in thought and action. As a zealous worker for reforms, he was a power to be feared by all evil-doers, and no movement along this line ever undertaken by him in his native city failed. With the outbreak of the Civil War, he was arrested by the Federal Government, kept a close prisoner for more than fourteen months, and then released without explanation. And indeed no explanation was possible; for he had been

an opponent of the Rebellion. When the war closed he saw more clearly than ever the need of reform in many governmental and municipal departments, and his eloquent addresses, especially those delivered before universities and educational bodies, bore rich fruitage in later years. In 1870 he succeeded John P. Kennedy as provost of the University of Maryland, and thus gained an additional means of influencing a multitude of young leaders in his State.

His poems, while they do not show large genius, impress us with the same carefulness, nicety in the distinction of words, and beauty of sentiment as we have noticed in other verse of the period. *The Last of the Hours, God's Acres, Truth and Reason,* and *The Blessed Hands* were read widely in former days, especially the latter, with its beautiful legend of the undying hand of the good monk Anselm:

"Oh loving, open hands that give,
Soft hands the tear that dry,
Oh patient hands that toil to bless—
How can ye ever die!

"Ten thousand vows from yearning hearts
To Heaven's own gates shall soar,
And bear you up, as Anselm's hand
Those unseen angels bore."

XIII

George Dewey
(1818–)

A very popular poem in ante-bellum days was *Blind Louise.* The exact date of the production of it is not known; but it must have been written previous to 1842; for in that year it appeared in Griswold's *Poets and Poetry of America.* The facts concerning the author, George Dewey, are just as meagre. Although a man of some prominence in literary and artistic circles of his day, he has left little on record con-

cerning his own life, and still less has been recorded by his contemporaries. We know that he was born at Baltimore in 1818, that early in life he went to Philadelphia, and that most of his life was spent there. His father was, for a time, a painter in that city, and the son, although engaged in mercantile pursuits, took great interest in artistic affairs and indeed held an office in the Art Union of Philadelphia. The many essays and reviews written by him during these years have never been collected. Of the numerous poems which we know he wrote very few besides *Blind Louise* now exist. This little poem is distinctly the result of Wordsworth's influence; for here are found the same sort of theme, the same simplicity in the sentiment, and the same absence of vivid coloring. The similarity is noticeable in any of the stanzas.

"She knew that she was growing blind—
Foresaw the dreary night,
That soon would fall without a stir
Upon her fading sight;

"Yet never did she make complaint,
But prayed each day might bring
A beauty to her waning eyes,
The loveliness of Spring!

. . .

"We found her seated as of old,
In her accustomed place,
A midnight in her sightlessness,
And morn upon her face."

XIV

Amelia Welby — (1819-1852)

Another poet whose works were widely read and extravagantly praised during this period, but whose name is totally unknown today to many students of American Literature, was Amelia Welby (1819-1852). In this case, however, such oblivion was by no means deserved. For, although lacking the disciplined mind and the wide knowledge so necessary in the

making of a great and true poet, she approaches in several instances perfection in rhythm and harmony. She, too, was from Maryland, having been born at St. Michael's in that State, and having spent much of her earlier life at Baltimore. After 1834 her home was in Louisville, Kentucky, and in that city she married a prosperous merchant, George Welby.

There, too, about the year 1837 she began to contribute under the name of "Amelia" some remarkably sweet and melodious bits of verse. In using such words, let us understand that the efforts had not the greatness of conception and of passion necessary for masterpieces; but they were indeed "sweet and melodious." Such poems naturally attracted wide attention, and when, at the age of eighteen, she published *Poems by Amelia,* she was encouraged to further endeavors by a most flattering sale of the book. These verses have much the character of those sought by magazines of today—short portrayals of a single sentiment melodiously expressed. Thus, in her *Twilight at Sea,* she sings:

"The twilight hours like birds flew by,
As lightly and as free;
Ten thousand stars were in the sky,
Ten thousand on the sea;
For every wave with dimpled face,
That leaped upon the air,
Had caught a star in its embrace,
And held it trembling there."

Such lines, especially the last four, are lifted by the art of their expression above the level of mediocrity. And, again, *To a Sea-Shell* is beautiful in both content and structure:

"Shell of the bright sea-waves,
What is it that we hear in thy sad moan?
In this unceasing music all thine own,
Lute of the ocean-caves?

. . . . . .

"'Tis vain—thou answerest not!
Thou hast no voice to whisper of the dead;
'Tis ours alone, with sighs like odours shed,
To hold them unforgot."

The ways of fortune are inexplicable. Poets of much less merit than Amelia Welby have received permanent recognition; but she, with all her "sweetness and melody," is unknown to the great majority of poetry readers. Again the people of the Southern States allowed excellence in literature to be forgotten. North of the Mason and Dixon Line such neglect of budding genius occurred with commendable rarity.

XV

James Mathewes Legaré — (1823-1859)

Let us close this study of the "lesser lights" of Southern ante-bellum poetry with another verse-writer who deserves more from posterity than he has received. James Mathewes Legaré, inventor, and poet,—how Poverty must smile at such a combination!—came of a noted family in Southern affairs; and yet the known facts concerning his career are very few. That he was born at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1823; that he patented many inventions, but failed through ill-health to carry them to financial success; that he published *Orta-Undis and Other Poems* in 1847, and that he died at Aiken, South Carolina, in 1859 seem to compose the sum-total of information about him.

The best known of his poems are *Ahab Mohammed* and *To A Lily*, two very different pieces, yet each excellent of its kind. *Ahab Mohammed* may be designated as a miniature of Lowell's *Vision of Sir Launfal.* It is not lacking in beauty of thought and grace of expression.

"A peasant stood before a king and said,
'My children starve, I come to thee for bread.'"

The king took him to the royal dining-room.

"Silent behind the folds of purple closed
In marble life the statues stood disposed."

And there, amid all the splendor, was the king's banquet—one small loaf of bread! For the city was besieged by the enemy, and all suffered for food. Taking the loaf, the king thanked God for it, and divided it equally between the peasant and himself. And lo! the beggar's rags dropped away, and an angel of Allah stood before the noble king.

"He who gives somewhat does a worthy deed,
Of him the recording angel shall take heed,
But he that halves all that his house doth hold
His deeds are more to God, yea more than finest gold."

Need we prove Legaré's versatility after quoting a few lines from *To A Lily?*

"Go bow thy head in gentle spite,
Thou lily white,
For she, who spies thee waving here
With thee in beauty can compare
As day with night.

. . . . . .

"Soft are thy leaves and white: her arms
Boast whiter charms.
Thy stem prone bent with loveliness,
Of maiden grace possesseth less:
Therein she charms."

Let us now pass from these minor figures in Southern Literature. Their weaknesses are evident; but are not many good qualities as apparent? The conception of great themes is not theirs; the intense fervor and the accompanying restraint are lacking; sustained efforts are rarely attempted. But melody of words, beauty of thought, artistic expression of sentiment—are they not here in some richness? In

these singers of simple lyrics we have at least the promise of greater things to come. Let us now turn to the very few who in some degree fulfilled the promise.

XVI

During this period there were living and working in the South at least two men whose poetry shows distinct, unmistakable genius and whose place among the better writers of American Literature succeeding years have but more firmly established. They are Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and Albert Pike (1809-1891). If we compare them with each other we find that their respective attainments differ extremely in literary excellence and therefore in absolute value; but when the two are compared with the majority of the other Southern writers of the period, it will be seen that their conception of what true literature is and requires, as well as their devotion to the production of the best within their respective powers, places them on a much higher level than that of their contemporaries. Literature was not a mere recreation to Poe and Pike; it was a life-work,—a something to which the efforts of a whole existence might properly be devoted.

Albert Pike — (1809-1891)

In Albert Pike we find a most versatile man. During the course of his life he was teacher, lawyer, poet, lecturer, editor, and soldier, and in every direction in which he turned his brilliant intellect, he never failed to do good work. Perhaps the fact that he was born at Boston had something to do with it! Doubtless his being a young man in New England when that section was beginning an exceedingly brilliant literary career influenced him; certainly his excellent mental training as a youth brought forth fruit. As a boy he lived at Framingham, Massachusetts, and there he

prepared to enter college. He did enter the Junior class at Harvard, but finding that he would be expected to pay the fees for the two previous years, he left the institution and completed the scholastic training by himself.

In 1831 he began a long tour of the West and wandered hither and thither, month after month, until he reached Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1832. There he decided to make his home. He opened a school and in his leisure moments wrote sketches, which he sent to *The Little Rock Advocate* and which were praised and commented upon rather widely throughout the West. These efforts soon secured for him the assistant editorship of the paper, and from this time his reputation grew steadily. Undertaking the study of law by himself, he was admitted to the bar in 1836. Two years previous he had published *Prose Sketches and Poems.* It was evident that literature and not law was his first love. In 1839 his *Hymns to the Gods* appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine,* and though written years before—in his twentieth year, it seems—they were most excellent and attracted much attention.

Soon the teacher, poet, editor, and lawyer was to enter a new field of action. The Mexican War came on, and, having recruited a cavalry regiment, he became a colonel and served through the conflict. He now began to feel the need of a wider field for his law practice, and accordingly, in 1853, he removed to New Orleans, where he was enjoying the prosperity and leisure of a typical Southern lawyer when the Civil War burst forth with its mighty social upheaval. Again he answered the call to arms, this time as a brigadier-general of Indian troops in the Confederate army, and again the versatility of the man stood the test. When peace was proclaimed he took up the practice of law in Memphis, and with this profession again combined

that of editor. Removing to Washington in 1868, he retained for a time his practice as a lawyer; but by 1880 he was spending all of his time on literary work, and when he died in 1891 few American writers were better known.

Perhaps the most widely read writings of Albert Pike are *Prose Sketches and Poems* (1834), *Hymns to the Gods* (1837), *Nugae* (1854) and *Morals and Dogma of Freemasonry* (1870)—for he was the highest Masonic dignitary in the United States; but these volumes do not by any means comprise all that he wrote. Much of his prose has not yet been collected. Pike's poems show the untiring care of an artist. He was not contented with "well enough"; he pursued excellence to the limit of his powers. Careful in rhythm and rhyme, he rarely fails to give the theme a poetic atmosphere. In his love for Nature he is particularly happy, often giving to a description the very sentiment that the reader has in a vague way felt but could not express. *To the Mocking Bird* is an illustration:

> "Thou glorious mocker of the world: I hear
> Thy many voices ringing through the gloom
> Of these green solitudes; and all the clear
> Bright joyance of their song enthralls the ear,
> And floods the heart."

Again, that love of Nature that has been a characteristic of so many of the world's true poets shines forth in these lines:

> "I cannot love the man who doth not love
> As men love light, the song of happy birds;
> For the first visions that my boy-heart wove,
> To fill its sleep with, were that I did rove
> Through the fresh woods, what time the snowy herds
> Of morning clouds shrunk from the advancing sun,
> Into the depths of Heaven's blue heart, as words
> From the Poet's lips float gently, one by one,
> And vanish in the human heart; and then
> I revelled in such songs and sorrowed, when,
> With noon-heat overwrought, the music-gush was done."

Of such a man we should expect in the treatment of Nature an imagery of some eloquence; and we are not disappointed. Read the spirited ode, *To Spring,* and note such language as this:

"Thou lover of young wind,
That cometh from the invisible upper sea
Beneath the sky, which clouds, its white foam, bind,
And settling in the trees deliciously,
Makes young leaves dance with glee,
Even in the teeth of that old, sober hind,
Winter unkind."

and this:

"Red Autumn from the south
Contends with thee; alas! what may he show?
What are his purple-stain'd and rosy mouth,
And browned cheeks, to thy soft feet of snow,
And timid, pleasant glow,
Giving earth-piercing flowers their primal growth,
And greenest youth?"

Pike, like many of the Southern poets, dealt much in sentiment; but, unlike some of them, he escaped largely the taint of sentimentality. In all of his emotion there is never lacking manliness. With the outbreak of war he wrote these words in a poem entitled *Dixie* (not, of course, the original song, which was composed by an Ohioan, Daniel Emmett):

"Southrons, hear your country call you!
Up, lest worse than death befall you!
To arms! To arms! To arms, in Dixie!
Lo! all the beacon-fires are lighted—
Let all hearts be now united!
To arms! To arms! To arms, in Dixie!"

What a step from this to his *Every Year:*

"Life is a count of losses,
Every year;
Lost Springs with sobs replying
Unto weary Autumn's sighing,
While those we love are dying,
Every year.

"The days have less of gladness
Every year;
The nights more weight of sadness
Every year;
Fair Springs no longer charm us,
The winds and weather harm us
Every year.

. . .

"But the truer life draws nigher
Every year;
And its morning-star climbs higher
Every year;
Earth's hold on us grows slighter,
And the heavy burden lighter,
And the Dawn Immortal brighter,
Every year."

It is difficult to place these poets of varying moods. Albert Pike taught no one great theory of philosophy; he was not of one school; he sang according to the mood of the moment. A Tennyson has his optimistic trustfulness, a Browning his theory of fearless manliness, a Whitman his bold declaration of equality, but this poet is not of their kind. He was but a singer of much art and some power, and his voice reached the hearts of many and influenced men for the better life. He did this and, doing that much, he accomplished in a great degree the poet's mission. We turn from him, however, to an artist of such marvelous powers in the use of his native tongue that few if any writers in the English language are his superior in this particular.

XVII

Edgar Allan Poe — (1809-1849)

One of the saddest and yet one of the most irritating stories in all literature is the narrative of the life of Poe. Endowed with talents of extraordinary power, he ruthlessly squandered and debauched them, and his life closed with but a beginning of the magnificent fruition which rightfully should have been his. Yet, the genius of the man survived in spite of the *man*.

Poe's early life was such as would try the mettle of far more stalwart souls. Left in the hands of unwise persons, he was led into those excesses toward which his excitable nature too easily prompted him, and which finally ruined his pathetic yet brilliant career. If ancestry be worth anything, he was fortunate in his; for his grandfather, David Poe, was the Revolutionary general over whose grave Lafayette murmured, *"Ici repose un coeur noble."* In 1803 the old hero's son, also named David, deserted his profession as a lawyer to join a company of players in Charleston, South Carolina, and three years later he married a member of the troupe, a beautiful widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Hopkins. Thus it happened that while the company was filling an engagement in Boston early in the year 1809, Edgar Allan Poe was born in that city, January 19.

Within two years the father was lying dead in Richmond, and the mother soon followed him. Three children were left to the charity of the city, and Edgar was taken by John Allan, one of the wealthiest men in the city. Thus the boy came to be called Edgar *Allan* Poe. And thus, also, the seeds of future ruin were sown; for the foster-father, proud of his brilliant charge, habitually had the boy brought before visitors to drink their health and make surprising speeches. The taste for liquor afterwards became the pursuing demon of his life, while the exalted, extravagant opinion of his own talents and of his own importance, gained as a child, never deserted him in manhood, and caused his days to be filled with bitter disappointments. In his early scholastic training he was fortunate. At the age of six he was taken to England and entered Manor House School, Stoke-Newington, and there the opportunity was his to wander through the streets of strange, old London and breathe in that love of the quaint and of the weird in which his soul already

so abounded. During the five years spent in the English school, he was praised among the masters because of his ability in Latin and French, and among the boys because of his prowess in out-door sports, while through personal characteristics he gained the *love of none.*

We find him, in 1821, once more in Richmond, and here, under the training of private tutors, he remained until 1826. Then began the tragic scenes of the man's career. He entered the University of Virginia, immediately gained notice in the study of languages, began to drink and gamble, contracted heavy debts, entered a counting-house of Allan's, ran away, and at length reached Boston. All this, too, within one year, be it remembered. While in Boston he published his first volume of verse (1827), and there, too, under the name of Edgar A. Perry, he enlisted in the regular army. He served near Boston, Charleston, and Fortress Monroe (where he obtained ideas for scenes in his *Gold Bug*), and proved on all occasions such an excellent soldier that he soon rose to the rank of sergeant-major. He kept his identity hidden very successfully for a time; but in 1829 Allan, whose heart had been softened by the death of Mrs. Allan, sought him out and during the next year had him entered at West Point. But Poe was not born to be a soldier. A student in the Military Academy thus wrote of him: "He was a devourer of books; but his great fault was his neglect of and apparent contempt for military duties. His wayward and capricious temper made him at times utterly oblivious or indifferent to the ordinary routine of roll-call, drill, and guard duties. These habits subjected him often to arrest and punishment and effectually prevented his learning or discharging the duties of a soldier." Of course such conduct could not long be tolerated at so strict an institution as West Point; and we find Poe discharged in March, 1831.

From this time forth his life was devoted to literature, and to literature only. His talent as a verse-writer had become known among his fellow-cadets, and before leaving the school he had secured subscriptions enough to issue the volume which appeared shortly after his discharge and which was entitled simply *Poems* (1831). Here we find promise of something decidedly worth while. The music of the verses astonished all readers, and although they contained no depth of thought and no strikingly sincere sentiment, they possessed a weirdness, a tone of romance, and a luxurious appeal to the ear that immediately charmed the reader. Of philosophy there was little or none. Poetry, he stated in this collection—which contained also his first publicly expressed theory of verse—has as its immediate object "pleasure, not truth." It is opposed to romance in "having for its object an indefinite instead of a definite pleasure . . . to which end music is an essential, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception."

But in spite of the rather novel theory and the beautiful poetic structures built according to it, the volume did not have a large sale, and Poe soon left New York, where it had been published, and returned to Richmond. Here again he met with discouragement. Mr. Allan would have nothing whatever to do with him, and he soon drifted on to Baltimore. In 1833 *The Baltimore Saturday Visitor* offered a prize of one hundred dollars for the best story submitted by an American writer, and from the hand of Poe there came a piece of fiction that surprised the literary circles of the South—*Manuscript Found in a Bottle.* It was a tale, strange in its plot and masterful in its presentment; it announced in Poe a new and peculiar writer. Now was the tide in his affairs which taken would have led to success. John P. Kennedy, of whom we have already read, took

notice of him, and in 1835 secured for him a position on the newly established *Southern Literary Messenger.* Within a few months he became editor; the circulation of the magazine suddenly rose from seven hundred to five thousand; and his prose was rapidly gaining him a wide fame. Here, too, he began to write a rather ferocious form of criticism and to display unfortunately a cheap learning so evidently shallow that he fully deserved the words of Lanier: "Poe didn't know enough." But, at the same time, his arguments were so filled with literary insight and undeniable though unpleasant facts that readers were compelled to admit their usefulness and were always anxious to read more.

During the next year he married his cousin, Virginia Clemm. She was but a child, only fourteen; yet their married life was ideal in its pure devotion, and she was ever a help and indeed an inspiration to the irresolute husband. Life indeed looked fair. But suddenly he gave himself into the clutches of liquor; his position as editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* was lost; and the remaining thirteen years of his life form but a disheartening succession of brief attainments and dismal failures. One year in New York, six in Philadelphia, back to New York, South again, and then death in a dreadful form—such is, in brief, the closing history of his career.

Writers in literature have given various reasons for Poe's losing so quickly this first editorial position and later in life various other positions of the same nature. Some have said that dissipation caused the frequent changes; others, meagre support of the magazines; still others, the fact that he desired to found a magazine of his own. Probably all of these reasons had much to do with the matter. Eighteen months from the time that he began work on the *Southern Literary Messenger,* we find him in New

York, and there in 1838 he published another story of startling character, his *Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym.* That same year he went to Philadelphia, where *The Gentleman's Magazine* had just been established by the comedian, Burton, and, having secured a place on the staff, he again soon found himself in the editor's chair. Again, too, the same literary and financial prosperity attended the change; but within a few months he was once more adrift. In 1840 *Graham's Magazine* was established at Philadelphia; Poe was selected as editor-in-chief; and the circulation quickly bounded from five thousand to fifty-two thousand. All this time he was writing desperately perhaps, yet well, and thrilling stories and trenchant criticisms poured forth in abundance. Most of his work, it is true, was in prose; for he considered poetry not a purpose but a passion, and never attempted verse unless *passion* was present. But what prose it was! The literary world of America had not seen such art before.

Eighteen months passed, and again he had lost the position of editor. After a brief period spent in miscellaneous work he returned, badly discouraged, to New York. Yet, the most productive years of his career were those spent at Philadelphia. Here, in fact, were written several of his masterpieces, *Fall of the House of Usher, The Murders in the Rue Morgue, The Mystery of Marie Roget,*—stories which from that year, 1843, when they appeared as *The Prose Romances of Edgar Allan Poe,* have influenced a notable line of the world's writers, Sardou, Verne, Kipling, Doyle, and many another.

Such graphic description, such morbid yet powerful imagination, such minuteness of detail, such logical structure, such plausibility carried to probability had rarely been evidenced in American Literature. Poe found himself an object of admiration

and of wonder. When, in 1844, *The Raven* appeared, the admiration and wonder redoubled. Readers in other lands began to speak of him, and Mrs. Browning wrote that a friend of hers who had a bust of Pallas, could not now bear to look at it. Indeed, from that day foreign critics, especially among the French, have had an inclination to place him at the head of the American school of writers, and some have declared that he alone among all the poets of the New World was an originator and a true artist.

However gratifying all this praise both at home and abroad may have been, the fact remains that Poe was drifting morally and financially from bad to worse. In 1845 he joined the staff of *The Broadway Journal,* published in New York, soon gained complete control of it, and brought it to financial ruin within three months. Then, accepting a position with *Godey's Lady's Book,* he proceeded to make enemies on every hand by writing in that magazine a series of articles entitled *The Literati of New York.* It so happened that shortly after the publication of *The Raven and Other Poems,* the Boston Lyceum invited him to recite a poem at one of its public meetings, and, having forgotten about the occasion until it was too late to compose something new, he went before the dignified body and recited *Al Aaraaf,* a boyhood effort, published in the first volume shortly after his abrupt departure from the University of Virginia. The rendition of this poem was followed by great applause, but when, a little later, Poe divulged the secret of the poem's origin, the Lyceum felt highly insulted. Poe now took occasion to declare that he did this to insult the "genius" of "the Frog Pond." He further stated that he himself was born at Boston, "a fact he was very much ashamed of, but for which he was in no wise respon-

sible." He criticised with unsparing ferocity Griswold's well-known book on American poets and so wounded the man's feelings that when the same author was afterwards selected to write a biography of Poe, human nature overcame the sense of fairness, and Poe's memory among men was darkened by the resulting work. Utterly devoid of policy, the eccentric nature of the poet made him numberless enemies.

He now published a full edition of his poems; but poetry is not a money-making art, and, although he received much praise, he was in the direst poverty. The last days of his life in the great city were most miserable. In January, 1847, his wife died. The pathos of that scene is almost insufferable. "There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow-white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw-bed, wrapped in her husband's great-coat, with a large tortoise-shell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the sufferer's only means of warmth, except as her husband held her hands, and her mother her feet."

Poe was now a mere wreck. In 1849 he wandered back to Richmond, remained there a brief time, and then went to Baltimore. Here, it is said, he was drugged and taken to the polls to be voted, and then left half dead, upon the streets. Fever came on, and he died Sunday, October 7, 1849. We may well close the strange story with the words carved on the memorial tablet in the New York Museum of Art: "He was great in his genius, unhappy in his life, wretched in his death; but in his fame he is immortal."

As a critic Poe may quickly be dismissed. He brought about some needed reforms in his day; for his ideals were high, and he required of both himself and others excellence in the strictest sense. But his decisions were too often based on personal likes or dislikes, and his final opinions too frequently nothing more than biased conceptions founded on inaccurate knowledge. His statements were at times violent, often bitter, and sarcastic to an unwarranted degree. Oftentimes he assumed an offensive superiority to which his display of second-rate learning did not entitle him, while his endeavors to please what he termed "the vulgar mob" led him into excesses that deprived his utterances of the most essential quality of a true critic—sincerity.

As a writer of fiction he must be recognized as one of the world's great masters. His field is narrow; but within that field his creative powers are so original, so startling that we may indeed consider him as its discoverer. And what is his field? Simply the short story—more particularly the short story dealing with human ingenuity.

In the very form of literature in which Americans have shown the most originality—humor—Poe is most deficient. Not that the man himself was devoid of the trait; for those who knew him best have described him as a genial man fond of a laughable tale, while at least one deed of his shows him to us of today as a lover of the practical joke. When a very young man he published a statement in a Baltimore paper declaring that on a certain date he would make a trip in his lately invented flying machine, and he cordially invited the public to be present. The day came, and a great crowd waited patiently for several hours. At length, after having enjoyed the spectacle sufficiently from a seat in an upper window, he sent forth a note stating that "unfortunately one

of his wings had gotten wet!" But no such turn of mind ever appears in his works. A tinge of hopelessness, a certain nervous dread, gloom, fear, a too-lingering gaze at the horrible, the ghastly, and the ghostly, almost acute morbidness—these are characteristics of his stories.

The claim has frequently been made that such subjects should not receive literary treatment, and that Poe's method of treatment, especially, goes beyond the bounds of literary propriety. But literature is not to be hemmed in by such prison walls; it is not forever a thing of soft sentiments and sweet descriptions. It deals with *life,* and every phase of life is worthy of treatment. Poe simply chose strange but not infrequent phases and portrayed them for all time. Under this general character of his work we may perceive, perhaps, four divisions into which his stories may fall: first, the Problem Story—such as *The Gold Bug*—where a logical explanation of an intricate puzzle is given; second, the Realistic Story of Adventure—such as *The Descent into the Maelstrom*—where sickening fear is most evident; third, the story based on the Fascination of Terror—such as *The Fall of the House of Usher*—where the reader is held as by the charm of a snake; and, fourth, the story founded on the Interest in the Horrible—such as *The Masque of Red Death*—where that rather morbid yet universal itching to know the details of a repulsive incident is catered to. Is not all this but another outgrowth of the weird and grotesque-loving Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century?

In spite of the uncanny subjects and treatments chosen by Poe, he proves interesting to many classes and conditions of readers. It has been said that he is thoroughly cosmopolitan; but if he be cosmopolitan it is not because he is of the earth, but rather

because, turning away from the world, he builds from his imagination, and from *it* alone, his fantastic structures. And thus he appeals to the universal man. When *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* appeared, Dickens wrote him a letter of praise, while the *Revue des Deux Mondes* gave a most flattering criticism. Brander Matthews has declared that at the end of the nineteenth century the works of Poe were the only American writings read eagerly in Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. It would seem from the fact that these stories are enjoyed in so many translations that their *form* cannot be the main source of their attractiveness. The tales are in general character highly artistic, and indeed perfection of narrative style is often approached; but beyond these traits are the power of the theme, the fascinating search into mystery, the constantly evolving plot, and the ever-present appeal to the universal characteristics of superstition, dread, and horror. And yet after all is said, the eternal quality of his fiction is its intensity; it is written with grim, unrelenting, demonic earnestness.

Swinburne has said of America: "Once as yet, and once only, has there sounded out of it all one pure note of original song—worth singing and echoed from the singing of no other man; a note of song neither wide nor deep but utterly true, rich, clear, and native to the singer; the short exquisite music, subtle and simple and sombre and sweet, of Edgar Poe." Such is the decision of one of England's most conservative critics; and no less flattering are the conclusions of various German and French *litterateurs*. And yet few, if any, Americans have ever regarded him in such a light. His ideas concerning poetry are so different from those held by other poets of the New World; his productions

are so novel, so incomprehensible to many; their intellectual results are so vague, so intangible. He is a poet without a philosophic message. He is not moral; neither is he immoral; he is simple unmoral. He denies the generally accepted belief that poetry is the handmaid of religion, philosophy, or morality; to him it is its own excuse for being. "His poems have no other purpose. They convey no moral; they echo no call to duty; they celebrate beauty only—beauty immaterial and evanescent."

Perhaps in his zeal he sometimes becomes a mere worker for effects. But in spite of these lapses from sincerity and in spite also of the highly artificial scheme of his poetry with all its fantastic and melancholy character, he produces a verse the effect of which defies analysis. The themes of his compositions are often vague, while very few stimulate thought; but the strange, hidden suggestion of imperishable beauty lingers long after the poems have been laid aside. In his opinion tone-production stands before contents in importance, and songs are sung simply because they *are* songs. His own verses are never rhymed dissertations or rhythmical sermons; their emotion is seldom overwhelming; they are simply epitomes of the sweetest harmonies in the language. Never was he so completely overcome by feeling that his facility in apt alliteration or his store of strange, melodious words deserted him. His philosophy was without form and void; for he came simply as an exponent of that one great thought of Keats': "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Lacking the insight of a Shakespeare, the depth of a Milton, and the learning of a Browning, he was, within his narrow bounds, a master singer, one so imbued with the harmonies of his native tongue that to him words became not so much instruments of thoughts as blending notes in spoken melody.

As a result of this, many of his poems are seemingly devoid of meaning, and defy explanation. *Ulalume,* for instance, is a mist of beauty, almost without substance; it is music in words. Is the fact to be wondered at, then, that American readers, whose views concerning poetry have been based for generations upon the sermonizing tendencies of writers born of Puritan stock, have failed to see in this new poet who sang without preaching, a man worthy of admiration? Perhaps, after all, this sense of the artistic effect of sound,—this seeking for perfection in harmony, is the best evidence of the influence of Poe's Southern environment; for time and time again in our study we have seen that sweet combinations of sounds rather than expounding of deep doctrines were the all-in-all to many of the Southern verse-writers. The tendency seems to have come to a masterful culmination in Poe.

That his scheme of poetry is peculiar cannot be denied. In the first place, he contends that the moment a poem ceases to interest intensely, it ceases to be a poem. Hence none of his poems are long. In the second place, he believes, as we have seen, that the *sound* of the word is poetically more important than its meaning, and that, after all, a poem is primarily a structure of harmonious tones. As a result, his poems not infrequently are hazy in meaning, but are none the less effective in their appeal to the soul. Again, departing from the usual standards of rhythm, he holds to the theory, afterwards expounded by Lanier and other Southern poets, that verse might and should be based upon the less regular and more nearly hidden rhythm of music, and that poetry is melody in words just as music is melody in tones which singly are meaningless and even not beautiful. The poem of words is to him the companion of the symphony of tones; each is irregular

in form and defies accurate analysis, and yet, as a whole, is capable of great emotional effects.

In order to carry out such a principle a master-hand is needed. The skill of Poe in the attainment of sounds is surpassingly great; for under his manipulation words take unto themselves a new sound, and flow in a liquid stream of naturally combining harmonies. Note the words of *Israfel:*

"If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky."

That he is a most successful seeker for melodious and haunting sounds is shown most plainly, perhaps, in *The Bells,* where the changing scenes are indicated fully as much by the combined arrays of vowels and consonants as by the meaning of the lines.

"Hear the loud alarum bells,
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire.

. . . . . .

"Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang and clash and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows
By the twanging
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows."

The alliteration, the gradual deepening of vowels, the intensifying pause, the sudden and rapid outburst

of startling sounds, these will give some hints as to the effectiveness of Poe's art.

Is it necessary that every poet should be a propounder of philosophy? Must a verse-maker usurp the clergyman's sphere before he is entitled to the crown of genius? Let us hope, rather, that in time we may all come to recognize the now much disputed fact that the song is worth while simply as a *song*. He who adds one mite of beauty to the world is worthy of immortality. Poe came to bring beauty —simply beauty of sound.

CHAPTER V

THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD

(1850-1875)

The period before us opened in bitterness and closed in sorrow. Within the quarter of a century included between 1850 and 1875 the very foundations of the Southern social system were swept away; the rich became poor, and the poor rich; slaves became citizens vested with the right of suffrage; an exceedingly wealthy territory became so poverty-stricken that even a succeeding quarter of a century of peace still found the States burdened with debt; a sacrifice of life occurred, so dreadful that the young manhood of the land was almost annihilated; and between the two sections of the great Republic there arose an animosity so fierce that the slightest comparison became insufferable. All this, be it remembered, came to pass, within the brief span of twenty-five years.

Was this a time for artistic literature? Could the poet dally with the muse, the novelist spin the webs of imagination, the essayist argue the abstractions of philosophy when the blood of thousands of fellow-mortals soaked their native fields, when the cry of the widow and of the orphan was heard in the land, and when an invading army left on every side far-reaching trails of destruction? During that great conflict sorrow was caused in the Northern States simply by the *report* of what was happening; but in the South it was caused not only by the report

but by the actual *presence* and *sight* of destructive horrors. The war was to New England but a distant conflict; it was *in* the South.

This was not an ideal period for the creation of literature. Men were doing, not dreaming. It was not a day for writing history; for all were busy *making* it. Moreover, the very nature of the subject uppermost in men's minds compelled such bitterness, such prejudice, such brutality of criticism that the restraint which goes to make true greatness in writing could not exist. Strife is not the friend of calm speculation; art is the aftermath of war, not the companion. Even in that department in which the Southern States had at all times excelled—statesmanship—there was a waning of true power. The unshaken judgment, the ability to unite in a convincing manner principles and occasions, the oratory that stings deep, yet is ever decorous and strictly within bounds,—these deserted the great majority of the statesmen of the day. The wild surge of passion overcame restraint. The subtleness, the touch of philosophy, and the largeness of conception that are, in the very nature of things, essentials of true oratory, seemed lost, and few indeed were the speeches worthy of admiration. When, therefore, we come to consider the form of literature which was of such power in the period of construction, *oratory,* we find no longer men of such mould as Calhoun and Clay. True, there were men who did eminent service in those years of hatred and strife. But the very presence of the "hatred and strife" prevented that broadness of conception so necessary in the character of a statesman of the highest rank.

I

Jefferson Davis — (1808-1889)

Now, among the men who probably should be mentioned as approaching this rank is the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis (1808-1889). He was a native of Kentucky, but early in life removed to Mississippi, and ever afterwards the chief interests of his life were connected with the latter State. After a course in Transylvania University, Kentucky, he entered West Point in 1824 and graduated in 1828. After seven years of military life, he was forced by ill health to resign his commission, and he now undertook the cultivation of a Mississippi plantation. We find him ten years later (1845) a member of Congress, later, an officer in the Mexican War, then Secretary of War under Pierce, and in the dark days of 1861 a United States Senator. Then it was, in January of the same year, that he delivered a brief and sorrowful farewell to his fellow-senators, and, returning home, began to make preparations for the defense of his State. But, in the meantime, he had been chosen President of the new nation and, hastening to Montgomery, Alabama, he began that career so full of labor, sorrow, and criticism. At the close of the war he was made a prisoner at Fort Monroe and remained in captivity for two years. He was released on bond and went abroad, but at length returned to Mississippi, where his last days were spent.

It is difficult to gain a true conception of this man's character and ability. If victory had been his, the qualities of greatness that he surely possessed might have shown clearly; as it was, the hatred and ridicule of the greater part of the victorious section fell upon him. Yet his work previous to the Civil

War had won for him the admiration of both the North and the South. As an orator he was a power. "His orations and addresses are marked by classical purity, chaste elegance of expression, a certain nobleness of diction, and a just proportion of sentence to idea." There is indeed a dignity, a high seriousness, in all that he wrote. *The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy* might be given as an illustration of this; but beyond it is his brief but memorable address on leaving the Senate. He had just received word that Mississippi had seceded. Rising in the midst of the silent assembly of his peers, he announced that Mississippi had "declared her separation from the United States."

"It is known to Senators who have served with me here that I have for many years advocated, as an essential attribute of State sovereignty, the right of a State to secede from the Union. Therefore, if I had not believed there was justifiable cause, if I had thought that Mississippi was acting without sufficient provocation, or without an existing necessity, I should still, under my theory of the government, because of my allegiance to the State of which I am a citizen, have been bound by her action. . . . I hope none who hear me will confound this expression of mine with the advocacy of the right of a State to remain in the Union and to disregard its constitutional obligations by the nullification of the law. Such is not my theory. . . . A great man, who now reposes with his fathers and who has often been arraigned for a want of fealty to the Union, advocated the doctrine of nullification because it preserved the Union. . . . Secession belongs to a different class of remedies. It is to be justified upon the basis that the States are sovereign. There was a time when none denied it. I hope the time may come again when a better comprehension

of the theory of our government and the inalienable rights of the people of the States, will prevent any one from denying that each State is a sovereign, and thus may reclaim the grants which it has made to any agent whomsoever."

II

Those early months of 1861 were indeed painful ones in the Senate. Day after day saw more vacant seats, and morning after morning, amidst the silence of suspense, members arose and bade farewell to their fellow-legislators. Among the men to go forth thus abruptly perhaps the greatest loss was in the person of Robert Toombs (1810-1885). Passionate in temper, vehement in speech, persistent to stubbornness, he became a force in any movement with which he connected himself. He was a native of Georgia, and, with the exception of his student-life at Union College, New York, and at the University of Virginia, his home and chief interests were always in that State. His first term in Congress began in 1845, and his work there continued for more than fifteen years. The story of his life from the year 1861 may be told very quickly. For a time he held a position in the Confederate cabinet, soon resigned, became a general in the Confederate army, fled, after the surrender, to Cuba and later to France, and remained abroad until 1867. In that year he returned to his home in Georgia, and passed his remaining years in comparative quietness.

Robert Toombs — (1810-1885)

Robert Toombs was a man sincere in his convictions, but extremely partisan. So bitter were his feelings after the war that he never took the oath of allegiance, and to his last day maintained the absolute righteousness of the "lost cause." His speeches

were true to the man. Fierce, dogmatic, overwhelming, they expressed no half-thoughts and hid no emotions. "Concentrated fire was always his policy." Therefore *his* farewell address on leaving the Senate had but little of the regret and restraint of the speech by Davis; instead, a tone of accusation, vehemence, and confidence in the final outcome pervaded the whole effort.

"Senators, my countrymen have demanded no new government. . . . What do these rebels demand? First, that the people of the United States shall have an equal right to emigrate and settle in the Territories with whatever property (including slaves) they possess. Second, that property in slaves shall be entitled to the same protection from the government as any other property (leaving the State the right to prohibit, protect, or abolish slavery within its limits). Third, that persons committing crimes against slave property in one State and flying to another shall be given up. Fourth, that fugitive slaves shall be surrendered. Fifth, that Congress shall pass laws for the punishment of all persons who shall aid and abet invasion and insurrection in any other State. . . .

"You will not regard confederate obligations; you will not regard constitutional obligations; you will not regard your oaths. . . . We have appealed time and again for these constitutional rights. You have refused them. . . . Redress these flagrant wrongs—seen of all men—and it will restore fraternity and unity and peace to us all. Refuse them, and what then? We shall then ask you, 'Let us depart in peace.' Refuse that, and you present us war."

III

Alexander H. Stephens — (1812-1883)

A man whose name was continually before the public during the conflict and for nearly twenty years afterwards was ALEXANDER HAMILTON STEPHENS, Vice-President of the Confederacy. He was a Georgian, and there had fought his way through many adversities until he graduated at the State University, had studied law entirely by himself, and had been admitted to the bar. Both nature and environment seemed to be against the man. He was left an orphan in utter poverty at fourteen. He was small in stature, so frail in constitution that the question ever before him was, "Am I physically able to do this?" While a teacher at Madison, Georgia, he gave up the school because he had fallen in love with one of the pupils and felt that it would be wrong for a man of such feeble health to marry. Year after year additional misfortunes came upon him. He was so badly crippled by an accident that he was obliged for a long time to use crutches; sickness in violent forms frequently made life a misery; the slightest strain overpowered him. Said a writer of his day: "He is the most unhappy looking great man I have ever seen."

But, hampered as he was, he was a man of marvelous power. He entered the State legislature in 1836, and Congress seven years later, and there he remained until 1858. In that year he retired from public life; but in 1861 the Southern States called him forth to be their Vice-President. He was confined for several months in the prison at Fort Warren, Massachusetts, and when released was physically a wreck. But with a spirit as strong as ever, he went to Atlanta, engaged in newspaper work, became a United States Senator in 1874 and again in 1876, and at the time of his death was Governor of

his State. So unbounded was the admiration of the common people for him that one old voter proposed that Georgia "send his crutches to Congress even after he himself was unable to go."

What was the source of his power? The answer is found in the keen, thoughtful, and sincere character of the man. His views often seemed at first sight to be contradictory, but when his argument is followed faithfully the doubt is dispelled. Just before the act of secession he made a most earnest plea for the preservation of the Union, and a few months later he accepted the Vice-Presidency of the Confederacy. But his speeches and papers show that at all times he denied the *necessity* of secession, but defended the *right* of it, while even during his occupancy of the office he seemed to have a genuine regret that the separation had occurred.

As a close and logical writer, he was a great aid to the South in the plea for the independence of the State. "Many writers," he remarks, in his *History of the United States,* "maintain that the individuals upon entering into society, give up or surrender a portion of their natural rights. This seems to be a manifest error. . . . The object of society and government is to prevent and redress injuries of this sort. . . . Another erroneous dogma pretty generally taught is, that the object of governments should be to confer the greatest benefit upon the greatest number of its constituent members. The true doctrine is, the object should be to confer the greatest possible good upon every member, without any detriment or injury to a single one." And Stephens was not only logical and convincing; he had a talent for description. Notice a few lines from a sketch of the Senate (1850):

"One vacant seat is seen not far off on the same side of the House. A vacant seat in such a crowd excites the attention of all. 'Whose seat is that?'

goes in whispers around. 'It's Calhoun's—not well enough to be out yet.' 'Who is that sitting by Cass?' says one. 'That is Buchanan—come all the way from home to hear Clay.' 'What thin-visaged man is that standing over yonder and constantly moving?' 'That is Ritchie of the Union.' 'Who is that walking down the aisle with that uncouth coat and all that hair about his chin? Did you ever see such a swaggerer? *He* can't be a Senator.' 'That is Sam Houston.' "

Among Stephens' writings are a *History of the United States* and an excellent *School History of the United States,* but his most powerful work is his *Constitutional View of the War Between the States* (1868). Written from the Secessionist point of view, of course, it is nevertheless lifted far above the mere partisan spirit. Slowly, persistently, minutely unraveling a most logical argument, the volume shows the work of a thinker furnished with an abundant knowledge of history, law, and statecraft. Few books have been more widely reviewed. In some magazines and newspapers a long war of words resulted; but, no matter what the opinion concerning the principles and theories of the volume, seldom, if ever, was Stephens' manner of expression successfully attacked. For he knew how to cast aside the superfluities surrounding the very core, or heart, of a subject, and, having once possessed himself of it, how to hold firmly to it against all endeavors to distract his attention. He was indeed "an earnest student of the science of government, and his writings in illustration of it possess great philosophical value." Had the conflict between the States come to a more successful issue for the South, Alexander Stephens might have held, through his tenaciously logical mind and knowledge of statecraft, a position of first rank among the world's statesmen.

IV

So far the statesmen whom we have noticed had attained great prominence before the war. The last of the legislators whose oratory and writings are deserving of discussion won his fame during the conflict and in the days of Reconstruction. ZEBULON BAIRD VANCE (1830-1894) was a native of the State for which he did so much, North Carolina, and at its university and at Washington College, Tennessee, he received his early training. He began the practice of law at Asheville, and then there followed the "inevitable" election to the State legislature. When he at length entered Congress, his wit and eloquence made him most conspicuous and so much a favorite that the projector of a new movement in the legislative halls zealously sought his support. In fact, to this day, many a native of the Old North State, when telling a good joke, always prefaces it by the statement that "Old Governor Vance used to tell it."

Zebulon Baird Vance — (1830-1894)

But Vance was something more than a humorous speaker—as both sections discovered during the conflict. He was very much opposed to secession but felt bound to follow the decision of his native State; and therefore when the war began, he organized and took command of a Confederate regiment. In 1862, however, he was elected Governor of North Carolina. Now the real ability of the man showed itself. He organized new regiments; he collected money and supplies; he endeavored to gain the sympathy of foreign nations; he unceasingly encouraged by both word and deed the worn-out soldiers of the South. He favored the consideration of peace in 1863, but, finding this hope futile, he returned to his energetic hostility. It was then that he gained the name "War Governor of the South."

The reputation thus gained was, of course, somewhat injurious to him in later years; for it was not until 1872 that he was allowed to hold a federal office. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1870; but his seat was refused him. However, he was elected Governor of North Carolina in 1876 and again entered Congress in 1879, and from that time until his death in 1894 he was a power in national politics.

It is, of course, because of his power as an orator and not as a statesman, that Vance is given attention here; for as a speaker he did indeed hold his audiences charmed. He was a man full of thought and yet not so much a philosopher that sentiment was alien to him. Often picturesque and vivid in his descriptions and always admirably simple and clear, there were in his addresses a certain chasteness of expression and a happy mingling of sentiments betokening the true orator. Notice, for instance, a few lines from a description of the ante-bellum negro:

"There is also a great change at hand for the negro. . . . Who that knew him as a contented, well-treated slave, did not learn to love and admire the negro character? I, for one, confess to almost an enthusiasm on the subject. The cheerful ring of their songs at their daily tasks, their politeness and good manners, their easily bought but sincere gratitude, their deep-seated aristocracy—for your genuine negro was a terrible aristocrat, . . . altogether, made up an aggregation of joyous simplicity and fidelity—when not perverted by harsh treatment—that to me was irresistible. . . .

"Nature ceased almost to feel fatigue in the joyous scenes. . . . The fiddle and the banjo, animated as it would seem like living beings, literally knew no rest, night or day; while Terpsichore covered her face in absolute despair in the presence

of that famous *double-shuffle* with which the long nights and 'master's shoes' were worn away together! . . .

"And there, too, plainest of all, I can see the fat and chubby form of my dear old nurse whose encircling arms of love fondled and supported me from the time whereof the memory of this man runneth not to the contrary. All the strong love of her simple and faithful nature seemed bestowed on her mistress' children, which she was not permitted to give to her own, long, long ago left behind and dead in 'ole Varginney.' Oh! the wonderful and touching stories of them and a hundred other things which she has poured into my infant ears!"

V

Just as the standard of oratory and of writings pertaining to statesmanship was lowered by the last bitter years preceding the Civil War, so the serious essay, dealing with the deeper and more general phases of life and its philosophy, was discouraged almost into nothingness. The local questions of States'-Rights and Slavery, with all their attending prejudices and preconceived ideas, not only hampered search for exact truth but kept the Southern intellect away from those eternal questions that have constituted the greatest element in universal literature. In the effort to defend an institution that should not have existed and that was proving a curse to the nation, the principal effort of all writers on questions then of paramount interest seems to have been toward the concealment of painful truths. Under such conditions a literature having as its purpose a criticism of life could not flourish.

Whatever we shall find in the way of essays during this period was written, for the most part, pre-

vious to the actual beginnings of hostility. Moreover, that which does not deal entirely with the bitter questions then agitating the nation, is of a light, entertaining, or even humorous character. But in those strange, tumultuous years extending from 1850 to 1875, how few indeed are the authors of even this form of literature!

Perhaps the first essayist worthy of notice among the writers of this period is Octavia Walton LeVert (1810-1877), a woman of brilliant talents and extensive culture. Born of a wealthy and influential family, fortunate in her early training and environment, happy in her marriage, gratified in her every wish, known and welcomed by the great and noble of several lands, she seems to have been a favorite of fortune. Her birth-place was near Augusta, Georgia; but when she was still a small child, her family removed to Pensacola, Florida, and there amid the beautiful surroundings of that resort she spent much of her girlhood. Besides possessing the advantages of living in such a neighborhood—for it possessed not only natural but social features—she was privileged on various visits to meet some of the most famous men of the day, among them Irving, Webster, Clay, Lafayette, and personages of equal rank. All of these she impressed as a girl of remarkable promise. Lafayette, taking her upon his knee, listened, spell-bound, to her use of his native language, and when she had finished, exclaimed, "Ah, a truly wonderful child! I predict for her a brilliant career." Irving became her fast friend, and in after years said of her, "She is such a woman as occurs but once in the course of an empire."

Octavia Walton LeVert — (1810-1877)

Extensive travel, added to her knowledge of languages and her general education, made her a woman of exceptionally broad culture, and her marriage, in 1836, to Dr. Henry LeVert of Mobile but enlarged her opportunities to shine in the highest intellectual circle of Southern life. In 1853 she made her first visit to Europe and two years later made a second one. It was during this latter trip that Lamartine, after listening with admiration to her descriptions of persons and places, advised her to write a book of travels. Said he, "You can fill with pleasure the hearts of your nation." As a result of these words there appeared in 1858 *Souvenirs of Travel*. It was a most decided success. Unhampered by conventionalities, fresh, accurate, rapid in movement, and ever happy in conception and expression, the book had a charm for every class of readers, and every class, it appears, did read it. Whatever topic it took up was presented from a new view-point and with a richness of phrasing too often absent in the American prose-writers of her day.

Perhaps the most familiar portions to readers of today are the description of the Brownings in Venice and the ascent of Vesuvius. The latter especially is a powerful piece of descriptive prose—in fact, an article bearing comparison with the very best work of the kind yet done by an American. Madame LeVert prepared two other volumes, *Souvenirs of the War* and *Souvenirs of Distinguished People;* but for personal reasons these were not published. Both would be of wide interest today; for, fortunately, the passion incident to the great struggle between the two sections has so nearly died away that such books would prove to be not only entertaining, but acceptable and authoritative sources for historical research.

VI

"The disposition to be proud and vain of one's country and to boast of it, is a natural feeling; but with a Virginian, it is a passion. It inheres in him even as the flavor of a York river oyster in that bivalve." So wrote Joseph Baldwin (1811-1864) in *Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi;* and the truth of his assertion was evidenced most strikingly in his own point of view. Although most of his life was spent in Alabama and California, he was a native of Virginia, and ever looked upon that land as the standard for all comparisons. In Alabama his rank as a lawyer was high, and later, when he became a citizen of California, his ability in this line secured for him, in 1857, the position of Judge of the Supreme Court and, in 1863, that of Chief Justice of the State.

Joseph Baldwin — (1811-1864)

Now, like many another lawyer in the South, Judge Baldwin "indulged" in literature. But, unlike many of these amateurs, what he produced is really excellent of its kind. In his descriptions of local scenes and local characters he infuses an individuality and a spirit of humor that cause his writings to stand considerably above the average. Thus, in his *Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi* and in his work of similar nature concerning California, he gives something more than a mere account of the "rough and ready" civilization of a newly settled section. Eccentric characters, curious customs, and ludicrous scenes give the subject a most diversified interest. The same words may be applied to his *Party Leaders,* a series of papers on great statesmen, in which the various characters stand forth in the full light of their widely different characteristics. There is life in all of these efforts. Frequently

there is a shy sort of satire; but it is always of a gentle and forgiving kind; for, of course, he, *as a Virginian,* has been more fortunate in his origin and opportunities. And he admits his prejudices and, from time to time, pokes fun at it too.

"Patriotism with the Virginian is a noun personal. It is the Virginian himself and something over. . . . He loves the talk about her (Virginia): out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. It makes no odds where he goes, he carries Virginia with him; not in the entirety always—but the little spot he comes from is Virginia. . . . He never gets acclimated elsewhere. . . . The right of expatriation is a pure abstraction to him. He may breathe in Alabama, but he lives in Virginia. His treasure is there and his heart also. If he looks at the Delta of the Mississippi, it reminds him of James River 'low grounds'; if he sees the vast prairies of Texas, it is a memorial of the meadows of the Valley. . . . 'It is the Kentucky of a place' which the preacher described Heaven to be to the Kentucky congregation."

VII

Thomas R. R. Cobb — (1823-1862)

It has been the misfortune of some men to be hindered rather than helped by their epoch. There appeared just before the first roar of the civil conflict a book called *The Law of Slavery,* a work of such accuracy, calm judgment and searching philosophical insight that it should have become known far and wide. Unfortunately, the clash of arms changed reason to madness, and they that might have read the book became slayers of their fellow-men. The author of the volume, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb

(1823-1862) was a Georgian, who, as Richard Malcolm Johnston has said, "had a combination of as many shining gifts as any man whom this country has produced." Educated at Franklin College, an institution founded upon the ancient pillars of Latin, Greek, Mathematics, and Belles-Lettres, he came into the world of affairs with a mind so developed and so keen that at the close of one year's practise of law, he was not only a highly successful attorney, but probably the best known one in the entire State. His power of concentration and his ability to cling to the main point in spite of all efforts to distract him made him a power in Southern legal circles.

It is not as a lawyer nor as a writer on legal subjects that Cobb deserves notice here; although his *Digest of the Laws of Georgia* is considered by many attorneys the most powerful and living condensation of law ever produced in America. But it is as a writer on the throbbing question of slavery and the yet unsettled question of education that he is worthy of memory. He was an advocate of peace, and, as the days of the Civil War approached, he became a most zealous writer upon the subject. Time after time articles by him appeared in the *Boston Post* and other Northern papers. His *Letters from an Honest Slaveholder to an Honest Abolitionist* and *A Georgian's Appeal to the People of the Non-Slaveholding States* made him a man of genuine influence in the North. It was in this period of his life that he published his *Law of Slavery*. Here indeed was a book admirable in its lack of prejudice, surprising in its arguments, strong in its grasp of historical and philosophical facts. During the brief time ensuing between its publication and the outbreak of hostility it received remarkably wide attention; but in the battles of four years its powerful reasoning was lost sight of, and when at last a period of calm-

ness came, slavery was no more. The author, too, had ceased to be; for in the second year of the war, while leading the famous "Cobb legion," he met death.

Cobb should be remembered as a champion of education. His papers on Free Education were eminently useful in a section where the institution of slavery so greatly hindered the enlightenment of the laboring classes, while, as founder of the Lucy Cobb Institute at Athens, Georgia, he has left to posterity a concrete evidence of his interest. His memory should live through *The Law of Slavery;* but, unfortunately, such is not the case. But whether the reader be from a Northern State or a Southern State, from America or a foreign land, he will always be surprised at the scholarly restraint and power of the book. It, with his other essays on the question of slavery, filled as they are with reference to law, ethics, and religion, and with descriptions of the conditions of slavery and of Southern life, should prove of unquestioned value to students of history, economics, and sociology.

VIII

George William Bagby — (1828-1883)

In mentioning the last character now to be discussed in the study of essayists and sketch-writers, we have finished a very meagre list; but there are few or none who have not been justly excluded. We have noticed in other periods that much of the sketch-writing was of a humorous character. Within this period, also, we have seen that doubt and bitterness did not wholly overcome the spirit of laughter and that a few writers still took time to describe the eccentricities of Southern life. George William

Bagby (1828-1883) was something of a genius in this form of literature. Who has not read *Jud Brownin's Account of Rubinstein's Playing?*

Bagby was a Virginian who, after having received a good education in the North, especially at the University of Pennsylvania, went back to Richmond to practise medicine, and there became a leader in literary movements. Many newspapers and magazines gladly accepted the humorous effusions of "Mozis Addums," while as a witty lecturer he was in still greater demand. During the first two years of the Civil War he was editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger* and later became State Librarian of Virginia. Such was his enthusiasm for literature, that, like many other professional men of the South, his avocation possessed a charm so strong as to make his vocation of secondary interest.

Dr. Bagby displayed no small ability in his descriptions of American life. Moreover, he had that greatly sought-for faculty of clothing wisdom in humor and thus poking sugar-coated sermons down the throats of passive readers. *Meekin's Twinses, My Uncle Flatback's Plantation,* and *What I Did with My Fifty Millions* are typical of American humor in their strong grasp of common sense and in their scorn of subterfuge. But his most delightful production is the account of Rubinstein's playing. Doubtless no other bit of American humor has held its place in public favor so persistently as has this hilarious, topsy-turvy description; for today it is more widely copied than ever before. And is this fact to be wondered at?

"When he first sot down he peared to keer mighty little 'bout playin', and wished he hadn't come. He tweedle-leedled a little on the trible, and twoodle-oodle-oodled some on the bass—just foolin' and boxin' the thing's jaws for bein' in his way. And

I says to a man sittin' next to me, s' I, 'What sort of fool playin' is that?' And he says, 'Heish!' . . .

. . . . . .

"Then the sun went down, it got dark, the wind moaned and wept like a lost child for its dead mother, and I could a-got up then and there and preached a better sermon than any I ever listened to. There wasn't a thing in the world left to live for, not a blame thing, and yet I didn't want the music to stop one bit. It was happier to be miserable than to be happy without bein' miserable. . . . Then, all of a sudden, Old Ruben changed his tune. He ripped and he rar'd, he tipped and he tar'd, he pranced and he charged like the grand entry at a circus. Peared to me like all the gas in the house was turned on at once, things got so bright, and I hilt up my head, ready to look any man in the face, and not afeard of nothin'. . . . He lit into them keys like a thousand of brick, he gave 'em no rest, day nor night; he set every living joint in me agoin', and not bein' able to stand it no longer, I jumpt spang onto my seat, and just hollered:

"*'Go it, my Rube!'*"

THE NOVELISTS

The same unfortunate conditions that prevented an admirable degree of perfection in the essay and short story likewise hindered the high development of the novel. One of the writers of the period, Hinton R. Helfer of North Carolina, declared, "The entire mind of the South either stultifies itself into acquiescence with slavery, succumbs to its authority, or chafes in indignant protest against its monstrous pretensions and outrageous usurpations. A free press is an institution almost unknown at the South. Free speech is considered as treason against slavery;

and when people dare neither speak nor print their thoughts, free thought itself is well-nigh extinguished. . . . Slavery tends to sluggishness—imbecility—inertia. Where free thought is treason, the masses will not long take the trouble of thinking at all. . . . The mind thus enslaved necessarily loses its interest in the processes of other minds; and its tendency is to sink down into absolute stolidity or sottishness. Our remarks find melancholy confirmation in the abject servilism in which multitudes of the non-slave-holding whites of the South are involved. In them ambition, pride, self-respect, hope seem alike extinct. Their slave-holding fellows are, in some respects, in a still more unhappy condition—helpless, nerveless, ignorant, selfish; yet vain-glorious, self-sufficient, and brutal. Are these the chosen architects who are expected to build up 'a purely Southern Literature'?"

This, be it remembered, was from the pen of a Southerner. It is not prejudice; it is largely truth. Yet, in spite of all, a few "chosen architects" did indeed arise. How few they were, and how poor some of their literary edifices! Time, in mercy, has covered their struggling efforts with the dust of oblivion. The list of names presented in this study mentions perhaps every one worthy of the attention of posterity.

I

Francis Robert Goulding — (1810-1881)

A book popular in this period and to some extent still popular is *The Young Marooners*. Its author, Francis Robert Goulding (1810-1881), was by vocation a clergyman; but his avocations perhaps brought him more noteworthy successes. In 1842 he conceived the idea of the sewing machine, and the instrument that he constructed was in use one year before Howe secured a patent for his famous

one. Goulding neglected taking out a patent because, according to his own statement, he had on his mind "more important affairs." Those more important affairs were doubtless his duties as a pastor; for both he and his wife were intensely interested in religious work. She it was who persuaded Dr. Lowell Mason to write the music to *From Greenland's Icy Mountains,* and its first presentation is said to have been in the Independent Presbyterian Church at Savannah, where Goulding was preaching.

During all the busy years of his ministry he found time to write for several church papers and to publish one or two small books of the old-fashioned Sunday School library type. It was in 1852 that *The Young Marooners* appeared. Within a year three American and two British editions had been published. Its popularity among juvenile readers was astonishing, and even during the Civil War, when the author, broken in health and spirit, was being driven from place to place, the sale in the North continued to be large. The war over, he wrote a sequel entitled *Marooner's Island,* and it, too, was a success. Then followed *Frank Gordon, Sapelo, or Child Life in the Tidewater, Nachoochee,* and *Tahlequah,* all highly popular works in their day, but now seldom read.

Only *The Young Marooners* has lasted, and with its stirring events, its vivid descriptions, and its go-away-to-sea sentiment, it deserves memory. It has that detail, that accuracy, and that knack of presenting strange, happy-go-lucky adventures which have made *Robinson Crusoe* and *Swiss Family Robinson* world-books.

II

Emma Southworth — (1818-)

In the ante-bellum days nearly every man, woman, and child in the United States had heard mentioned the name of Emma Southworth; today only the student of literature knows anything at all about her. She represents a stage in the growth of American tastes, a stage which has been passed in the aesthetic development of the people, thus leaving her almost readerless.

Contrary to most lives, hers was a youth full of sorrow and an age full of contentment. She was born in 1818 of French-English parentage, at Washington, D. C., and in or near that city much of her life was spent. Perhaps she was too reserved and yet too passionate to make herself beloved; perhaps the faults of her character were more evident than those of others. However that may be, her childhood and early womanhood were cruelly marred, and while yet young, the culmination came when, deserted by her husband, she found her children looking to her for support. Then it was, and for their sake, not for literature's, that she began to write. Amidst sorrow, humiliation, and privation, she worked out her first plot and wrote with a vigor and desperation born of the circumstances. Suddenly all of life changed before her. Her novel, *Retribution* (1849), was accepted and was read by thousands. "Friends crowded around me," she writes; "offers for contributions poured in upon me, and I, who six months before had been poor, ill, forsaken, slandered, *killed* by sorrow, privation, toil, and friendlessness, found myself born, as it were, into a new life; found independence, sympathy, friendship, and honour, and an occupation in which I could delight."

From this time she wrote most voluminously—far too rapidly for strong work. More than fifty volumes stand today as an unread monument to her industrious imagination. Yet they are not all bad; none are unreadable; none indeed lack some fascination. But to call them "sensational" would be to give but a mild description of them. Quarrels, bloodshed, dark intrigue, murders, and mysterious disappearances keep the blood of an excitable reader tingling. Such fiction appeals to the lover of "thrills." Not possessing the subtle power of Poe's masterpieces, they emulate, to some degree, the "creepy" effect of his productions. Their apparent plausibility and, in part, artistically involved plots lift them high above the level of the "yellow-back" novel; for they do portray certain phases of life—though extreme phases, it must be admitted. Yet, she herself has claimed that not once did she have to draw upon her imagination for the basis of a single character. She has indeed chosen strange specimens of humanity and thus called down the critic's ire on the score of unreality; but life is broad and literature is broader, and the writer may choose wherein to delve.

Retribution, The Fatal Marriage, The Haunted Homestead, The Widow's Son, and others that charmed former generations do not affect the readers of a more aesthetic period. The world has now passed to another view of disaster. There may be sorrows deeper than those of death; there may be cruelty without bloodshed; there may be a hell without fire. Emma Southworth failed to deal with life from this point of view. She dealt with physical punishment and disaster, and not with those subtler forms of soul-torture, which, though unseen, are more deadly than the visible wound.

III

Richard Malcolm Johnston — (1822–)

Such a tale as *The Young Marooners* or *Retribution* might have been written by a person from any section of the Union. But the stories of the writer whom we shall now notice could be the work of only a native of the South—and of the old, ante-bellum South at that. Richard Malcolm Johnston reflects most clearly that time and that section. Born on a Georgia plantation, he grew up under the old regime, learned to perceive the beautiful inner life of its society, and lived to see it crumble away in wretchedness and distress. His childhood, spent among the picturesque scenes incident to the slavery system, must have been extremely happy; for time and time again he alludes to those days. "Some time ago I went to the home-place, and an old negro came eight miles, walked all the way, to see me. He got to the house before five o'clock in the morning and opened the shutters while I was asleep. With a cry he rushed into the room, 'Oh, Massa Dick!' We cried in each other's arms. We had been boys together."

He attended a country school and later prepared for college at a very fine private school then existing at Powelton, Georgia—the "Dukesborough" of his *Dukesborough Tales*. After graduating at Mercer College (1841) he taught school for two years and then took up law, in which profession he remained for ten years. All this time he was acquiring bountiful material for the tales and character sketches which were to bring him so near to the reading public. The ten years of legal practise past, he accepted the professorship of Belles-Lettres in the University of Georgia; but in so doing he rejected positions of greater importance; the presidency of

Mercer College and a seat as Judge of the Superior Court. During the four years spent in this work, he wrote, with the aid of Dr. William H. Browne, the well-known *History of English Literature*, a volume of thorough scholarship and undoubted merit. Then followed several years of private school work in Georgia and near Baltimore, and at last came the time when his reputation and income warranted his giving himself entirely to the work so well beloved—the writing of fiction. *Dukesborough Tales, Old Mark Langston, Mr. Absalom Billingslea and Other Georgia Folk, Widow Guthrie, Mr. Billy Downs and His Likes, Pearce Amerson's Will,* and many other hearty tales have gained for him not only the admiration and honor but the very love of his readers. He may be mentioned as an example of steady, unremitting progress in literary excellence.

Johnston is first and last a writer of *what he has seen.* The familiar phases of life and the joys of the "good old times" are reflected in his every effort. He lingers over homely life and homely characters. And how his humor pervades all! True to the life that he has known, with its eccentric people, its old-fashioned negroes, its gossipy villages, and its backwoods settlements, he never fails to show by his sympathetic touch, those common bonds of interest that connect all human beings.

Although eccentricities, dialects, and customs furnish much of the humor of these narratives, perhaps the greater part is the result of incidents. He loves to bring out an eccentricity by means of some unimportant happening. Thus, in his *Life* of Alexander H. Stephens, he tells of an old man who was almost dead from fever. "The system of Therapeutics in vogue at that time and in that section included immense quantities of calomel, and rigorously excluded cold water." The sufferer had begged and begged. He threatened his slave,

Shadrach, with terrible punishment, but the negro, believing that his master would die, was unmoved.

" 'Shadrach, my boy, you are a good nigger, Shadrach. If you'll go now and fetch old master a pitcher of nice cool water, I'll set you free and give you *Five Hundred Dollars!*' And he dragged the syllables slowly and heavily from his dry jaws, as if to make the sum appear immeasurably vast.

"But Shadrach was proof against even this temptation. . . .

"The old gentleman groaned and moaned. At last he bethought him of one final stratagem. He raised his head as well as he could, turned his haggard face full upon Shadrach, and, glaring at him from his hollow, bloodshot eyes, said:

" 'Shadrach, I am going to die, and it's because I can't get any water. If you don't go and bring me a pitcher of water, after I'm dead, I'll come back and *haunt* you! I'll *haunt* you as long as you live!'

" 'Oh Lordy! Master! You shall hab de water!' cried Shadrach, and he rushed out to the spring.

"The next morning he was decidedly better, and, to the astonishment of all, soon got well."

It has been mentioned that the humor of Johnston rests partly on eccentricities in the characters which he portrays. Who that has read *Mr. Absalom Billingslea and Other Georgia Folk* will forget Mr. Hood, with his vast veneration for age—"a virtue that he professed to fear might die out before long"? What chagrin was his when he discovered that his little son, Riley, had dared to contradict the great-grandmother's Revolutionary memories!

" 'Gittin' too smart, my young man, an' a danger of too big for your breeches. People tells me you so smart you go 'way up 'bove gran'ma, an' she acknowledge she know nothin' compar'd to you. . . .

" 'Yes, sir, smarter'n gran'ma! that all the fambly ben a-lookin' up to from all—from all generations, sir, exceptin' o' you, sir. Now, sir, I'd be that proud that they aint everybody I'd even speak to, if I could believe you'd ever live to come anywhars nigh a-bein' as smart a man as your gran'ma—er, as smart a 'oman—that is, as a—'

"Here, feeling that Riley would laugh, if he dared, at this confused comparison, he grew more incensed and louder.

" 'Oh, yes, sir; you want to laugh, do you? But you know who's who now; an' it aint gran'ma you can conterdick an' run over, not by a jugful.' "

The wife interposed in the boy's behalf, and argues for him:

" 'I was going on to say that when gran'ma—an' bless her heart *she* know how *I* love *her*—but when she went to Yorktown whar the British give up, right thar by Danville, an' make the Jeems River an' the Staunton, an' the Roanoke all a empt'in' clos't to whar she lived an' into one another—' "

But the irate husband attributes all the wife's remarks to the boy.

" 'You inconsidible or'nary!' cried Mr. Hood, in profoundest, angriest disgust. . . . 'What *is* this generation of boys a-comin' to?' "

The plot in Johnston's stories is sometimes loose in structure; perhaps, too, there is a certain lack of sequence in incidents; but there is that which covers many defects—trueness to life. The slow, leisurely characters, their quaint ways and ideas, their humble relations toward one another and to life, and, above all, the simple, sure touch of realness that pervades each scene give a satisfaction exceeding that gained by mere artistic finish. Richard Malcolm Johnston has not written that which will place him with a Hawthorne or a Poe; nevertheless, there will be a smile for him in generations to come.

IV

Sarah Anne Dorsey — (1829-1879)

In the period now before us, writers of the quality of Richard Malcolm Johnston were the exception, not the rule. Mediocrity had many a votive, and few indeed were the men and women who rose superior to it. Among those few was Sarah Anne Dorsey (1829-1879). Her work is not great; much of it is not permanent; but it possesses qualities that in her day lifted it above the level, and influenced to no small extent the ideas and tastes of Southern readers and authors. Her maiden-name, Ellis, was well known throughout her native State, Mississippi, and the large means of her family and the general culture of the society in which they moved gave her enviable advantages. She received a good education, traveled extensively, and became a brilliant and versatile woman.

In 1853, when she married Samuel Dorsey, of Louisiana, and removed to that State, her intellectual strength showed itself in most practical ways. For, seeing the absolute degradation into which the slaves of her section had been allowed to sink, she established on her plantation a church and a school for them, and thereby set an example by which her neighbors were not slow to profit. *The Churchman* (New York) became interested in her experiments and gave her the name "Filia Ecclesiae," and "Filia" she henceforth used as a pen-name. During the war her home was destroyed and her means greatly reduced, and before the effects of these calamities had passed away, her husband died. Her last days were spent at her former home, Beauvoir, Mississippi,—the property which she left to Jefferson Davis.

It was for *The Churchman,* that she did her first work; but the best of her productions appeared in *The Southern Literary Messenger* and other Southern journals. *Agnes Graham* was published in *The Southern Literary Messenger* in 1863, but was not put in book form until nearly seven years later; while *The Vivians* and *Chastine* were given to the public in serial form. *Panola, A Tale of Louisiana* and *Atalie* enjoyed wide popularity in her day. Perhaps only one of her stories, *Lucia Dore,* a war novel published in 1867, failed to be a success. And, yet, one character in it, Jennie, the negress, is doubtless the finest character she ever portrayed. Perhaps the gloomy days succeeding the conflict had changed the mood of the Southern reader; perhaps the Southern reader had for the time being become almost extinct; but, whatever the cause, the vivacity, the pithiness, and the generally interesting plot of the tale did not save it.

But one volume most decidedly *did* attract—her *Life* of Governor Allen of Louisiana. There are not a great many biographies written by Americans surpassing this one. Full of life, yet accurate, it gives us the man and not his dead image. As a magazine criticism of the time said, "Governor Allen is a flesh-and-blood likeness, not a coldly accurate, inanimate portrait, the features perfect, but the expression wanting." Unlike many American biographies of the ante-bellum type, it is free from far-stretched, extravagant praise, free from all attempts to make a god of an erring human being.

There is in this biography a pathos that may be appreciated by both North and South, after these years of peace. At the close of the Civil War Governor Allen is an exile on his way to Mexico:

"Everything was very quiet and still, nothing audible but the low murmur of our voices, when

suddenly arose from the prairie beyond me, one of the beautiful, plaintive, cattle or 'salt' songs of Texas. These wild, simple melodies had a great attraction for me. I would often check my horse on the prairies, and keep him motionless for a half-hour, listening to these sweet, melancholy strains. Like all cattle-calls, they are chiefly minor. . . . They consist of a few chanted chords with a cadence and a long yodl. . . . The boy sang one of his saddest calls. I looked quickly to see if Governor Allen had noticed the melancholy words and mournful air. I saw he had. He ceased talking, and his face was very grave.

"The boy sang:

'Going away to leave you,
Ah-a-a-a.
Going away to leave you,
Ah-a-a-a.
Going away tomorrow,
Ah-a-a-a.
Going away tomorrow,
Ah-a-a-a.
Never more to see you,
Ah-a-a-a.
Never more to see you,
Ah-a-a-a.'

". . . The song died mournfully away. We drove on in silence for a few moments. Governor Allen roused himself, with a sigh—'That boy's song is very sad.'

"'. . . You need not make special application of it!'

"'No; but it may prove a strange coincidence.'"

With such tragedy in real life, tragedy in fiction was superfluous. Some cynic has said that people talk most of the things which they know the least about.

V

Marion Harland (1831-)

During the same years that Mrs. Dorsey was doing her early literary work, another Southern woman, of almost the same age, had already gained recognition as a writer of no small talent, and was rapidly maturing into an artistic strength that today gives her a permanently high place among American writers. The name, MARION HARLAND, is familiar to most American readers; but her real name, MARY VIRGINIA TERHUME, is practically unknown. She was born near Richmond, Virginia, in Amelia county, where her father, a native of Massachusetts, kept a store. She was a precocious child, and, under the training of her ambitious mother, she absorbed to an almost incredible degree the spirit of that which is best in literature. At the age of eleven she had committed to memory large portions of such poems as *Paradise Lost,* Thomson's *Seasons* and Cowper's *Task,* while such works as *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Plutarch's Lives* were favorite volumes.

At fourteen she was contributing to weekly papers; at sixteen she had written her *Marrying Through Prudential Motives* for *Godey's Lady's Book.* She was not yet twenty-two when her first novel, *Alone,* received wide attention, and before the age when most women are just reaching preparation for a life-work, she had gained a secure and high position in her chosen field. In 1856 she married a minister, Mr. Edward Terhume, of New York, and three years later she removed to the North. Yet her choice of themes is Southern life, and in that she shows her good judgment; for she knows the subject as few have ever known it.

The number of her volumes is large, and yet, in spite of her voluminous productions, there is power in the greater part of her work. Moreover, much of her writing shows but little sign of waning popularity. Indeed, *Sunnybank, Mirian, Judith, Husks, The Story of Mary Washington,* and one or two others bid fair to be permanent gifts to American Literature. *The Story of Mary Washington,* written to aid in the erection of a monument to the mother of Washington, is remarkable for its insight into the life, environments, and influences of the great leader. It bears the same traits as are evident in her novels—simplicity, liveliness, a convincing way of saying things, and a face-to-face manner of telling the story. Note but a few lines from the book. Washington has gained freedom for his country, and now, at a Peace Ball, held at Fredericksburg, his mother is honored as *his* mother.

"A path was opened from the foot to the top of the hall as they appeared in the doorway, and 'every head was bowed in reverence.' It must have been the proudest moment of her life, but she bore herself with perfect composure then and after her son, seating her in an arm-chair upon the dais reserved for distinguished guests, faced the crowd in prideful expectancy that all his friends would seek to know his mother. . . . From her slightly elevated position she could, without rising, overlook the floor, and watched with quiet pleasure the dancers, among them the kingly figure of the commander-in-chief, who led a Fredericksburg matron through a minuet.

"At ten o'clock she signed to him to approach, and rose to take his arm, saying in her clear soft voice, 'Come, George, it is time for old folks to be at home.' Smiling a good-night to all, she walked down the room, as erect in form and as steady in gait as any dancer there.

"One of the French officers exclaimed aloud, as she disappeared:

"'If such are the matrons of America, she may well boast of illustrious sons!'"

Marion Harland has attempted several kinds of story-telling, and she has been effective in all. She has both tenderness and strength. She seems to know how to use all the means known to literary craftsmanship. The ghost-story in *Judith,* for instance, is a narrative that possesses something of the Poe-like art of terror. One will not soon forget how, year after year, the ghost of a woman came to Madame Trueheart's bed—the same ghost that had frightened Colonel Trueheart's first wife; how, the night before his death, the ghost searched hither and thither throughout the room, and how years and years later, when the old mansion was torn down, the skeleton of a woman was found, without coffin, without sign of decent burial.

Such bits of artistic narrative as this, the description of early Virginia life, the simplicity, and the lack of strained effects have given to her writings no small emotional force. She suffers but little from the besetting sins of so many of the earlier Southern writers—lack of subtlety, and silence on the greater questions of life; for she has attempted to solve some at least of these ever-present problems. Her volume, *Common-Sense in the Household* (1871) has sent a much-needed message into many a vexed home. Being a woman of purpose and elevated ideals, she speaks with sincerity. "I believe it is possible," she has said, "to elevate household drudgery into a mission, to make home the center of thought and duty, and yet help the toilers in other homes." But beyond such, of course, are the tenderness, the truth, the vivid characterization, and the romantic quality of her fiction. In these things she is indeed an artist.

VI

John Esten Cooke — (1830-1886)

Perhaps the most widely known and most popular novelist the South has ever had was JOHN ESTEN COOKE (1830-1886). In his early work imitative to some degree, in his later productions hasty unto negligence, he nevertheless possesses qualities that lift him high above the common run of fiction writers and make him at his best, the companion of Irving and Cooper. In not a few ways he resembles these two men; for he unites in his writings the gentler traits of the one with the more strenuous character of the other. A love of lingering description and the charm of wild activity are in him well mingled.

He was born at Winchester, Virginia, in 1830 and, like his brother, Philip Pendleton Cooke, the author of *Florence Vane,* enjoyed exceptional advantages in mental endowment, environment, and opportunities for general culture. The father, John Roger Cooke, was in his day perhaps the strongest lawyer in the State, and the son, having chosen the same profession might easily have gained a lucrative practice. But John Esten Cooke had none of the father's love for the court-room, and, although he did indeed open an office, he used it mainly for the writing of poems and fiction. We may fairly say that he gained precious little from his vocation but much from his avocation. At the age of twenty-four he had become rather widely known through some of his fiction, especially *Leather Stockings and Silk,* and *Virginia Comedians.* At length he gave up entirely the attempt to be both lawyer and writer, and henceforth his whole time was devoted to literature. With the outbreak of war he entered the

Confederate army and during the last years of the campaign was Inspector General of the horse artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia. Paroled at the surrender, he once more returned to the quiet but industrious life that he so much preferred.

Of course, as a Virginian, he wrote of the beloved Mother of States. That it was indeed beloved may be inferred from his words concerning his home: "I would rather pass my time quietly here at 'The Briars' in the beautiful Valley of the Shenandoah than rule a nation." From his first to his last novel, the trend of his efforts never varied. "His aim was to paint the Virginia phase of American society, and to do for the 'Old Dominion' what Cooper had done for the Indians, what Hawthorne had done for the Puritans, what Simms had done for South Carolina, and what Irving had done for the Dutch."

Now, like most American novelists, he wrote much that has perished. Some of his stories are not read today; some are not even heard of; but, when all this is said, there remain for posterity such permanent works as *Virginia Comedians*, *Stories of the Old Dominion*, *Surrey of Eagle's Nest*, *Henry St. John, Gentleman*, and *Hilt to Hilt*. These, by their vividness, their forceful characters, and the very power of their movement, will not soon pass away.

It has been mentioned that there is in him a love of lingering description. How he delights in the scenes of colonial days,—the horse-racing, the stately dances, the contests between fiddlers, the barbecues, and all the other quaint elements of that curiously hearty but cultured society! For an evidence of this, note but a few lines from a description of a horse race in the *Virginia Comedians:*

"As the day draws on, the crowd becomes more dense. The splendid chariots of the gentry roll up to the stand, and group themselves around it, in a

position to overlook the race-course, and through the wide windows are seen the sparkling eyes and powdered locks, and diamonds and gay silk and velvet dresses of those fair dames who lent such richness and picturesque beauty to the old days, dead now so long ago in the far past. The fine-looking old planters, too, are decked in their holiday suits, their powdered hair is tied into queues behind with neat black ribbon, and they descend and mingle with their neighbors, and discuss the coming festival.

"Gay youths in rich brilliant dresses caracole up to the carriages on fiery steeds, to display their horsemanship, and exchange compliments with their friends, and make pretty speeches, which are received by the bright-eyed damsels with little ogles, and flirts of their variegated fans, and rapturous delight.

". . . There are gay parties of the yeomen and their wives and daughters, in carryalls and wagons filled with straw, upon which chairs are placed; there are rollicking fast men . . . who whirl in, in their curricles. . . . There are horsemen who lean forward, horsemen who lean back; furious, excited horsemen, urging their steeds with whip and spur; cool, quiet horsemen who ride erect and slowly; there are, besides pedestrians of every class and appearance, old and young, male and female, black and white—all going to the races."

Thus he takes the quaint phases of the old life, of the Virginia life when it was in its bloom, when Washington, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, the Randolphs, the Lees, and a host of others whose names are household words, lived and wrought for the nation. True to nature, as he saw it, he is picturesque at all times.

Whether he is always true to life is an open question; for the stricture is too frequently true of him, as of those he unconsciously imitated, that "wizards,

gloomy barons, French dancing masters, fair young maidens, lamiae, Christian big-Injuns, savage half-breeds, secret panels, mysterious packages, thunder, duelling, and desperation are thrown into the cauldron, stirred with a pen, and spiced with genuine love for the grand old Blue Ridge and romantic Massanutten." That he does love wild scenes cannot be denied; the healthy blood of a new race was in him. Yet the spirit that rushes and swirls in many of his narratives is higher than that of mere violence. Thus, in *The Virginia Bohemians,* the description of a fight with the moonshiners has a dramatic quality that mere bombast and sensationalism can never impart. The moonshiners have barricaded themselves in a narrow mountain-pass; the militia have found them.

" 'Halt!' the lieutenant's voice was heard shouting, as he whirled his light sabre. 'Form column in rear: I'll soon attend to this.'

"The men stopped and fell into column again, just beyond range of the fire of the barricade.

" 'Dismount and deploy skirmishers: Advance on both flanks and in front! I'll be in the center.'

". . . Then, at the ringing 'Forward' . . . the skirmishers closed in steadily, firing as they did so on the barricade.

". . . Nature was pitiless and serene; the red crowns were rising peacefully from the summits of the trees; a crow was winging his way toward the summit on slow wings; it was a scene to soothe dying eyes if the light needs must disappear from them.

"In ten minutes it had disappeared from more than one on both sides. . . . The crack of the sharp-shooters was answered from behind the barricade, and the gorge was full of smoke and shouts as the assailants closed in. . . . In the shadowy gorge the figures were only half seen as the light

faded, and the long thunder of the carbines and shouting rolled through the mountain, awaking lugubrious echoes in the mysterious depths."

However weak in some respects Cooke may be, he is an admirable character-builder. In his earlier work he was in full sympathy with Cooper and Simms in that he had great admiration for the "natural" man. In his first volume, *Leather Stockings, and Silk* (1854) the leading figure is Hunter John Myers, a huge, rough, yet wholesome and pure man, uncultured but admirable in strength and manliness. But he does not fail to see the beauty of which the cultured soul is capable, and therein, especially in his portrayal of the gentle yet courageous spirit of woman, he far surpasses Cooper. Few indeed are the female characters in American fiction more lovable and more touchingly pictured than Beatrice Hallam, the actress, in *Virginia Comedians.* For another instance of this mingling of strength and elegance, that strongest of all his characters, Henry St. John, is worthy of praise. Using large canvases for his portrayals of society, the characters that he creates are ever distinct, vivid, intensely living.

His faults, it has been hinted, are plain. He too often lapses into sentimentality; he sometimes mistakes bravado for bravery; he is tainted with sensationalism; he is often too romantic; he does not at all times face squarely the sterner phases of life; he is frequently in haste; he forgets, in his interest in the tale, the demands of art. And, in spite of it all, his work is good—it is excellent. The words of praise bestowed upon *Virginia Comedians* might be applied most justly to others of his many volumes: "The whole book is redolent of youth and poetic susceptibility to the beauties of nature, the charms of women, and the quick movement of life." He is

ever cheerful; hope never leaves him. Even in *Surrey of Eagle's Nest,* written in 1866, when the South was one vast field of wretchedness and despair, there is the same strong call for courage and a belief in a future victory. Such a writer could not have come at a more needed time.

Why, then, has his fame diminished? The question is answered in his own words: "Mr. Howells and the other realists have crowded me out of the popular regard as a novelist, and have brought the kind of fiction I write into general disfavor. I do not complain of that, for they are right. They see, as I do, that fiction should faithfully reflect life, and they obey the law, while I was born too soon and am now too old to learn my trade anew. But in literature, as in everything else, advance should be the law, and he who stands still has no right to complain if he is left behind." Such indeed is the cause of his neglect. He was essentially a romanticist, not a realist. He did not write to prove theories; he was simply a teller of stories. Unlike the later fiction, his tales do not blindly follow where a merciless destiny leads them; for he at all times considers it best that his characters should "live happy ever afterwards."

Perhaps, if the *people* were asked, it would be found that the human heart still hungers for such a story. Perhaps they would say, with Burne-Jones: "Don't lend me any sad stories—no, not if they are masterpieces. I cannot afford to be made unhappy. . . . There would be a beautiful woman in it—all that is best in a woman, and she would be miserable and love some trumpery frip (as they do) and die finding out she had been a fool—and it would be beautifully written and full of nature and just like life, and I couldn't bear it. These books are written for the hard-hearted, to

melt them into a softer mood for once before they congeal again—as much music is written—not for poets but for stockjobbers, to wring iron tears from them for once; that is the use of sorrowful art, to penetrate the thick hide of the obtuse. . . . Look! tell me it ends well and the two lovers marry and are happy ever afterwards and I'll read it gratefully."

VII

Augusta Evans Wilson — (1835-)

It may be seen that in the literature of this period woman took a more prominent part than in any previous era. The scanty list of fiction writers deemed worthy of our attention here has contained almost as many names of female writers as of male; and our study may justly close with a feminine name, Augusta Evans Wilson (1835-). In so doing, we leave unnoticed the work of *St. George Tucker* (1828-1863), whose *Hansford* deals with the very beginnings of American life; *Caroline Lee Hentz,* author of *The Planter's Northern Bride;* and others whose attempts portray the Southern phase of American life. But these "attempts" were, for the most part, so crude or so lacking in influence upon Southern Literature that we cannot profitably linger over them. Already charity has indeed been strained in giving space to as many as have been discussed.

Augusta Evans Wilson is by birth a Georgian, for she was born at Columbus in that State; but most of her life has been spent at Mobile, Alabama. Early in her youth she removed with her parents to San Antonio, Texas, and in that sparsely settled country, with no educational advantages whatever in it, she received, nevertheless, a remarkably good education

from her highly cultured mother. It was in this town, also, that her imagination was first aroused to the creative pitch. The Mexican War was on, and the constant coming and going of soldiers, the brilliancy of the military environments, and the general tingle of excitement in all about her suggested to her a story, and at the age of fifteen she wrote *Inez, A Tale of the Alamo,* published in 1855, one year after John Esten Cooke had begun his rapid production of fiction. *Inez* was good work *for a girl of fifteen;* but when that is said, praise should cease. As a Southern reviewer said, shortly after its publication, "there is not a natural character and scarcely a natural phase in the whole volume."

Four years later came *Beulah,* and with it success for the author. For the book caused a great sensation and indeed deserved to do so. The heroine is independent, sceptical, and unhappy, seeking with bold, determined mind for the truth concerning God and the Soul. As it attacked the questions fearlessly, and as it was free from the besetting sin of early Southern fiction—sentimentality, the book was indeed a strong effort and was worthy of wide discussion. For a time the Civil War drew her attention from literary work; but amidst a multitude of unfavorable circumstances she at length completed another book, *Mocaria* (1864), and sent it through the blockade to Havana to be forwarded to her publisher at New York. But in the meantime she had allowed a Richmond printing-house to publish a hasty edition for the aid of the Southern cause, and, a copy of this having fallen into the hands of a Northern printer, the book was pirated, and the usual pecuniary reward long denied her. *Mocaria* is another story of the trials and tribulations of a thinking soul. Here again there is a suffering woman, with, this time, a suffering man toiling along a parallel course. There is supposed to be a final

triumph—such is evidently the author's meaning—but every discriminating reader closes the volume with the conviction that here is too much pain, too much sorrow—more than the reward is worth. As Dr. Davidson wrote in his *Living Writers of the South* (1869), "there is too much *iron* in the book."

Soon after the close of the war came *St. Elmo.* Who has not heard of *St. Elmo*? In the early seventies the words were on every one's lips. "Towns, hotels, steamboats, and plantations were named after it." Overloaded with bits of learning from far and strange sources, undoubtedly weakened by what is perhaps an unconscious pedantry, the story, nevertheless, possesses a beauty of plot, a strange strength in its characters and an attractiveness of thought that give it undeniable charm. It is doubtful whether any American book has been more widely discussed. Critics lauded it; critics condemned it. The characters were ideal! The characters were too learned! The heroine was a model! The heroine was too scholastic! But critics have never ruled the reading public of America. What praise did not do for the sale of *St. Elmo,* harsh criticism did, and every man, woman, and child in the Union seemed anxious to read it. Month after month editions sold as quickly as they came from the press.

The future work of Mrs. Wilson was now awaited most eagerly. Before her next novel, *Vashti* (1869), went to press a check for fifteen thousand dollars was sent to her, and such liberality was indeed warranted; for the sale in both America and England was enormous. But now there came a sudden cessation of her work. In 1868 she had married Mr. L. M. Wilson of Mobile, and he, seeing how the constant labor was sapping the vitality of her weak frame, begged her to cease from further efforts. For ten years not one story was penned. Then, after the death of her husband, came *Imfelice* and

At the Mercy of Tiberius. Again there was a silence of many years, until in the opening days of the twentieth century there appeared another decided success, *The Speckled Bird.*

It is somewhat difficult to be fair to such a writer. That her work is brilliant cannot be denied. It makes its readers think and they enjoy the process; it contains beauty of sentiment; there is a certain aloofness from commonness; there is the ever-persisting effort to solve the higher mysteries. But there are such evident defects—the tone of unnaturalness caused by the too frequent reference to remote learning, "the dash of display," the undue amount of argumentation, and the "over-profuseness" of the conversation. History, mythology, and biography are, of course, good for fiction when used sparingly; but they should not cast their weight upon every line of the narrative. Glance at these sentences taken from but twelve or fifteen lines of *St. Elmo*:

"The mantle of Solomon did not fall at Le Cayla on the shoulders of Maurice de Guerin."

"After all, he was a wretched hypochondriac, and a tinge of *le cahier vert* doubtless crept into his eyes."

"Pardon me, if I remind you, *par parenthèse,* of the preliminary and courteous *En garde!* which should be pronounced before a thrust."

"I have passed alike the bourrans of the steppes, and the Samieli of Shamo, and the result of my vandal life is best epitomized in those grand but grim words of Bossuet: *'On trove au fond du tout le vide et le néant!'* "

"Human life is as fair and tempting as the fruit of 'Aim Jidy' till stung and poisoned by the Tenthredo of sin."

But, in spite of this defect, the style often rings with a clear eloquence. Her descriptive ability is not to be gainsaid. The description in *St. Elmo* of the great tomb, Taj Mahal, in India, erected to the

memory of that Noormahal whom Tom Moore has immortalized in *Lalla Rookh,* is now famous in many lands. Even if, at times, the scenes are too gloomy and forlorn, their power must be acknowledged. A few lines from *Beulah* will serve as an illustration:

"She slowly ascended to the third story. . . . From this elevated position she could see the stormy, sullen waters of the bay breaking against the wharves, and hear their hoarse mutterings as they rocked themselves to rest after the scourging of the tempest. Gray clouds hung low and scudded northward; everything looked dull and gloomy. She turned from the window and glanced around the room. . . . Here were the paintings and statues she had long been so familiar with, and here, too, the melodeon which at rare intervals she opened. The house was very quiet; not a sound came up from below; she raised the lid of the instrument and played a plaintive prelude. . . . As her trembling voice rolled through the house, she seemed to live the old days over again. . . . The marble images around her, like ghosts of the past, looked mutely down at her grief. She could not weep. . . . Just before her stood the Niobe, rigid and woeful; she put her hands over her eyes and drooped her face on the melodeon. . . . The wind rose and howled round the corners of the house; how fierce it might be on trackless seas, driving lonely barks down to ruin, and strewing the main with ghastly, upturned faces."

There is a peculiarity about the figures that move to and fro in her works. Although the reader realizes that he never has seen just such characters, he feels, at the same time, their strength, beauty and uplifting influence. Perhaps these beings of the novelist's imagination are a bit too formal. Perhaps, too, "the hero quotes Latin, without translating it, to his aged mother, and again to a girl in her earlier

teens," and both come back at him with overwhelming quotations from theology or history. But there are no weaklings among them. They may be fighting what they know to be a hopeless battle with destiny; but they fight on. Such novels should delight the aggressive and strengthen the hesitating. *Iron* is indeed an element in the make-up of the men and women of these volumes.

But, after all, perhaps the most valuable element in Mrs. Wilson's works is the *living thought* that pervades the whole. She has not hesitated to attack fearlessly the mightiest questions of human life. There is a most decided tone in every word. Of doubtful assertions there are few; but there is indeed much in the nature of a challenge. All that she has written, with the exception of *Inez,* possesses a certain trait of practicalness—a bold attempt to see what is "true and righteous altogether." Here, then, is something with a new view, a something very different from the efforts of Simms, or Cooke, or Mrs. Terhume. The ideals of intellectual life are striven for; these are stories of soul-struggles. Even if strained at times, they have, nevertheless, the tone of sincerity, the uplifting influence of an earnest searcher for truth.

POETRY

I

One would think that in those years of bitter sectional feeling and bloody strife and final widespread desolation, poetry could not have flourished; and to no small degree such a supposition is true. But, as has been noted earlier, war has called forth from nations remarkable bursts of poetry, especially *lyric* poetry. The Revolution brought forth a few songs as did the War of 1812 and the Mexican War;

but it remained for the Civil War to be the great inspiration for lyrics of battle. Unfortunately for the Southern Confederacy, the North had more great singers than did the South. While Bryant, Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Walt Whitman, Boker, and a host of others were arousing their comrades, the South was *comparatively* silent. Not *wholly* silent, be it remembered, but *comparatively* so.

Doubtless the racy song, *Dixie,* was the most popular lyric in the Southern ranks, and, yet, strange to say, it is the production of a Northerner. Written in 1859 by Daniel Emmett, a native of Ohio, it was sung on the minstrel stages of New York nearly two years before its first rendition in the South, in a New Orleans theatre. Equally strange are the instances of *Old Kentucky Home* and *Swanee River* written by Stephen Foster (1826-1864), a native of Pennsylvania.

Now, in the Union camp a large number of airs soon became widely popular. Naturally every band played *Yankee Doodle,* another strange instance, in that it was written by a British surgeon in derision of the American soldiers, and was soon taken up by them as a camp-song. Among the many lyrics heard in every Union regiment were *John Brown's Body Lies A-Mouldering in the Grave* (1861), with its defiant words:

"John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,
His soul is marching on!"

We Are Coming, Father Abra'am, Three Hundred Thousand More, written by James Sloan Gibbons; the truly inspiring *Battle Cry of Freedom,* by George Frederick Root:

"Yes, we'll rally round the flag, boys, we'll rally once again,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom;
We'll rally from the hill-side, we'll gather from the plain,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom!"

the jovial *When Johnny Comes Marching Home,* by Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore:

"The men will cheer, the boys will shout,
The ladies, they will all turn out,
And we'll all feel gay,
When Johnny comes marching home!"

and that now classical hymn, written in 1861 by Julia Ward Howe:

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is tramping out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible sword;
His truth is marching on.

. . . . . .

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on."

Later in the strife came *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching,* written by George Root; *Tenting on the Old Camp Ground,* by Walter Kittredge, with its sorrowful chorus:

"Many are the hearts that are weary tonight,
Wishing for the war to cease,
Many are the hearts, looking for the right,
To see the dawn of peace."

and the highly popular *Marching Through Georgia,* by Henry Clay Work. These are but a few of the songs that strengthened the hearts of the Northerners in one of the deadliest struggles the world has ever known.

What songs were written for the Confederate brave during those dark days? Small indeed is the number. Many melodies were sung in camp, of course; but most of them were old lyrics that had been known throughout the South for years, and of the small number composed *during* the conflict, a very, very few became widely known and popular.

Dixie, as has been mentioned, was heard in every camp. Various State-songs were revived. But not many lyrics actually lending themselves to music were produced. Albert Pike wrote, during the first days of hostility, his stirring *Southrons, Hear Your Country Call You;* but this was an exhortation rather than a song. Some unknown Virginian wrote a popular piece, *Call All,* beginning:

"Whoop! The Doodles have broken loose."

And still another Virginian, whose name is unknown, wrote *The Soldier Boy:*

"I gave my soldier boy a blade,
In fair Damascus fashioned well;
Who first the glittering falchion swayed,
Who first beneath its fury fell,
I know not; but I hope to know
That for no mean nor hireling trade,
To guard no feeling base or low,
I gave my soldier boy a blade."

One that every camp resounded with was *The Bonnie Blue Flag,* a strong, vigorous lyric written by Harry McCarthy, and sung first in a New Orleans theatre. It does indeed possess that reckless swing which is necessary to every popular ballad:

"We are a band of brothers, and native to the soil,
Fighting for the property gain'd by honest toil;
And when our rights were threatened, the cry rose near and far,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star!

Chorus.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! for Southern rights, hurrah!
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star!"

But when all is said about these and such others as were known in separate camps, there remains one touching song that all sincerely loved, *My Maryland.* Justly, indeed, has it been called "the Marseillaise of the Confederate cause."

The story of its origin is interesting. It was written in 1861 by James Ryder Randall of Louisiana. Randall was a professor at Poydras College, Pointe Coupée; and it was while there that he arose one night from a wild dream, and wrote the words. Soon afterwards Mrs. Burton Harrison set the poem to an old college melody, *Lauriger Horatius,* known among German university students as *Tannenbaum.* Never was a song taken up more quickly. And with its mingling of sorrow, sternness, pride, and hope, it is worthy of memory.

"The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle-queen of yore,
Maryland, my Maryland!"

Some one has made an expression like this: "Let me make a nation's songs, and I care not who makes her laws." The influence of literature on a nation's welfare is greater than most men judge it to be. In warfare inspiring words are as necessary as arms. The Southern cause was unfortunate in not possessing more lyrics applicable to the special struggle through which it was passing. We may well close the list on the one hand with Father Ryan's mournful words in *The Conquered Banner:*

"Fold that Banner, for 'tis weary;
Round its staff 'tis drooping dreary.
Furl it, fold it,—it is best."

and on the other hand, with that pathetic, despairing cry in Walt Whitman's *O Captain! My Captain!*

"Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead!"

II

When we come to study the individual poets of this period, we find a fair general level of verse, with several instances of really noble work. As in previous eras, the love of the lyric is in evidence, and in this department there is no small amount of sweetness, harmony, and technical skill. But the deeper philosophies of life are handled perhaps a little more often; greater sincerity seems present; and, although the power of sustained effort belongs to but few, there is in other ways a marked improvement.

Alexander Beaufort Meek — (1814-1865)

One of the early lyric writers was Alexander Beaufort Meek (1814-1865). While a small boy he removed from his birthplace, Columbia, South Carolina, to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and there in the University of Alabama and, later, in the University of Georgia, he received his general and law education. Of course, as a Southern lawyer, he entered politics, and held various important positions, among them being that of Assistant-Secretary of Treasury (1845). He found time, however, like many another Southern lawyer and politician, to become an amateur in literature and to serve as editor of such important papers as *The Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union, The Southron,* and *The Mobile Register.* His verses appeared frequently in Southern papers and magazines, and when they were collected in *Red Eagle* (1855) and *Songs and Poems of the South* (1857), they received enthusiastic notice.

Meek was a writer of some sweetness and no little vigor. In all of his poems there is good lyric quality. For instance, in this last stanza of *The Mocking*

Bird, there is some true harmony, and besides, there is a certain lightness that is not without charm:

"Bird of music, wit, and gladness,
Troubadour of sunny climes,
Disenchanter of all sadness,—
Would thine art were in my rhymes.
O'er the heart that's beating by me,
I would weave a spell divine;
Is there aught she could deny me,
Drinking in such strains as thine?
Listen! dearest, listen to it!
Sweeter sounds were never heard!
'Tis the song of that wild poet—
Mime and minstrel—Mocking Bird."

Much of his work is of this character and quality. Take, again, *A Song;* here we have real lyric freedom—the spontaneity of expression, the happiness of sentiment that make a true melody:

"The blue-bird is whistling in Hillibee grove,—
Terra-re! Terra-re!
His mate is repeating the tale of his love,—
Terra-re! Terra-re!
But never that song,
As its notes float along,
So sweet and so soft in its raptures can be,
As thy low whispered words, young chieftain, to me."

But it has been mentioned that melody and pleasing sentiment alone do not make a great poet. Living thought, passionate questionings, dramatic force, and deep emotional power have been and ever will be requisites. These Meek did not possess. As was the case of others to be discussed, he was an amateur in poetry, a man who expressed a few sentiments in delicate, pleasing fabrics.

III

Theodore O'Hara — (1820-1867)

Again we come to a man made famous by *one* production — THEODORE O'HARA (1820-1867), author of *The Bivouac of the Dead.* He was born at Danville, Kentucky, and received his education, both academic and law, in that town. In his twenty-fifth year he secured a clerkship in the Treasury Department at Washington; but he gave this up to enter the Mexican War. For a time he practised law at Washington, then began newspaper work, serving as editor of *The Mobile Register* and *The Frankfort Yeoman,* and at the opening of the Civil War, entered the Confederate army and at its close came out ranking as a colonel, but absolutely penniless. His remaining years were spent as a cotton buyer in Georgia and Alabama. He was buried first in Georgia, but by a special act of the Kentucky legislature, his body was taken to Frankfort and buried among the heroes of Buena Vista.

Now, as both soldier and poet, he deserved this honor. For, besides having served with these dead, he wrote his one worthy poem on the occasion of their burial at Frankfort. Some lines of *The Bivouac of the Dead* are today more familiar to many Americans than quotations from far greater poets. The opening words of the verses have been heard on many a public occasion:

> "The muffled drum's sad roll has beat
> The soldier's last tatoo;
> No more on Life's parade shall meet
> That brave and fallen few."

And as one walks through some of the great national cemeteries, where rows upon rows of graves stretch before the eye, the appropriateness of some portions is striking.

"On Fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead."

And again:

"Nor war's wild note nor glory's peal
Shall thrill with fierce delight
Those breasts that never more may feel
The rapture of the fight."

The poem has been most fortunate in its setting, its environment, and the mood of its readers. Seen, as it almost always is, amid the silence and gloom of these vast burial grounds of heroes, it has a strange effect on the already saddened hearts of its readers. Certainly not in American Literature and perhaps not in any other literature is there such another poem, holding its own against time, *through the help of the dead.*

IV

Margaret Preston — (1820-1897)

During the same years that Augusta Evans Wilson and other women of the South were gaining much attention as novelists, a woman, named Margaret Preston, the wife of a Virginia professor, was producing a poetry which was in that time and is today considered of an exceedingly high degree of excellence. Margaret Preston (1820-1897) was the daughter of Dr. Junkin, founder of Lafayette College, Pennsylvania, and was born at Philadelphia. During her twenty-eighth year her father became president of Washington and Lee College, and from that time forth she resided in Virginia and her main interests were centered in the South. She married Colonel

J. T. L. Preston, a professor in the Virginia Military Institute, at Lexington, where most of her literary work was done.

She was a rather quiet woman, but her intellectual attainments were brilliant. One of her earliest memories, she declared, was standing at her father's knee, when only a little one three years old, learning the Hebrew alphabet. At ten she was reading difficult Latin; at twelve she had made good progress in Greek. Her range of reading in English was exceedingly wide and careful, a fact that is evidenced in the influence of English poets upon her work and also in that polish of expression which only association with the best in literature can give.

Her first volume was a novel, *Silverwood—A Book of Memories* (1856). It was a quiet, simple story, rather sad in its general tone, and distinctly Southern in its scenes and trend of thought. Although good, it was not excellent; and its popularity was rather limited. In her second volume Mrs. Preston found that the sphere of her work was poetry. *Beechenbrook; A Rhyme of the War,* written in the midst of the strife, and published in 1866, was undoubtedly the most popular poem in the South during the entire war decade. In those days it received a welcome rarely accorded to American verse. It is a long poem, covering sixty or seventy closely printed pages, and, as the title indicates, is a narrative of the great struggle. Here we have a description of that life of agonizing suspense led by many a soldier's wife. There is in it, to quote from the volume itself,

> "The clangour of muskets, the flashing of steel,
> The clatter of spurs on the stout-booted heel,
> The waving of banners, the resonant tramp
> Of marching battalions."

But ever present amidst this show and flourish of

war is that sadder feature—the torturing anxiety of those who wait by the fireside. And along this line the poet shows no small power in her vividness and emotional effect. Naturally the volume is not a restful one; the theme would hardly permit of such a characteristic; but its trueness to the stern, bitter life that millions of men and women had experienced in those troubled days gained for the work most hearty approval. Technically the verse is for the most part good, and some of the lyrics scattered throughout the volume are melodious. One especially was often repeated in that day—the one beginning:

> "Break, my heart, and ease this pain;
> Cease to throb, thou tortured brain;
> Let me die, since he is slain—
> Slain in battle!"

After the publication of this volume, her books appeared at rather wide intervals. *Old Songs and New* was published in 1870, *Cartoons* in 1875, *For Love's Sake* in 1887, and *Colonial Ballads* in the same year. There may be perceived in these works a gradual growth in precision and dramatic force. Fortunately, in the case of *this* Southern poet there is little or none of the affectation so often seen in verse-writers of the period. Far more serious thought is found here. The "humanness" of the woman, the soul of her shines out. There is no cant, no pedantry in her effort, but simply the spirit of a thinking, feeling being. In her descriptive ability she was not far behind some of her much better known contemporaries. She sometimes places a scene before us with remarkably few strokes; as, for instance, in *A Grave in Hollywood Cemetery:*

> "Dim
> The city's hum drifts o'er his grave,
> And green above the hollies wave
> Their jagged leaves, as when a boy,

On blissful summer afternoons,
He came to sing the birds his runes,
And tell the river of his joy."

This ability to put the right word in the right place is one of the charms of Margaret Preston. Everywhere there is a simplicity of diction, but melody is just as prevalent. When she chooses, said one criticism of the day, "her rhymes run off with an airy tinkle and twinkle that show her work to be no labored manufacture, but the true effluence of a soul to whom the poem form is innate and essential." But, on the other hand, there are times when "tinkle" and "twinkle" are absent, and in their place is the rapid, simple movement of the true balladist.

Perhaps it is in this last named quality that she is at her best. Oftentimes her work is imbued with suggestions of great restraint. She shows this in her earliest work, in *Beechenbrook, Regulus,* and her translation of *Dies Irae,* and in her later work the curbed intensity, which is ever an essential of art, is even more evident. Read, for instance, her version of the strangest of all events in American history, in *The Mystery of Cro-A-Tan.* As she tells this familiar story of the lost colony of Roanoke, she catches something of the spirit of folk-lore and fills the whole narrative with a tone of absolute mystery.

"How could a hundred souls be caught
Straight out of life, nor find
Device through which to mark their fate,
Or leave some hint behind?"

Again, in *The Hero of the Commune,* we have something out of the ordinary in exciting portrayal and in the power to enlist sympathy. By its abruptness, its strong expressions, its suppressed feeling, and its faculty of making one word do duty for a whole sentence, these few lines, describing a mere

boy and his willingness to die for a cause, are indeed effective.

" 'Garcon! You—*you*
Snared along with this cursed crew?
(Only a child, and yet so bold,
Scarcely as much as ten years old!)
Do you hear? do you know
Why the gendarmes put you there, in the row,
You, with those Commune wretches tall,
With your face to the wall?'

. . . . . .

" 'Know? To be sure, I know! why not?
We're here to be shot;
And there, by the pillar's the very spot,
Fighting for France, my father fell;
Ah, well!
That's just the way *I* would choose to fall,
With my back to the wall.'

. . . . . .

" 'Parbleu! Come out of the line, I say,
Come out! (who said that his name was Ney?)
Ha! France will hear of him yet one day!' "

And, if still further proof of this intensity of dramatic portrayal be desired, a more quiet instance may be found in *Lady Yeardley's Guest,* describing the coming, on Christmas eve, of an Indian warrior, "chief of the Roanokes," with his little boy whom he wished to have reared in civilization,

" 'To learn of the speaking paper;
To hear of the wiser ways
Of the people beyond the water;
To break with the plough the sod;
To be kind to papoose and woman;
To pray to the white man's God.' "

It has been mentioned that there is no affectation in Mrs. Preston. Her sentiment is wholesome—it is more; it is lofty, idealistic. Its purity has often caused her to be compared to Mrs. Browning, and the comparison is not unjustified. Note the sentiment of resignation in such lines as these:

"What will it matter by and by
Whether, unhelped, I toiled alone,

Dashing my foot against a stone,
Missing the charge of the angel nigh
Bidding me think of the by and by?

. . . . . .

"What will it matter? Naught, if I
Only am sure the way I've trod,
Gloomy or gladdened, leads to God,
Questioning not of the how, the why,
If I but reach Him by and by."

Again this purity and loftiness of thought and emotion may be felt in one of her most widely read poems, *Calling the Angels In:*

"We mean to do it. Some day, some day,
We mean to slacken this feverish rush
That is wearing our very souls away,
And grant to our hearts a hush
That is only enough to let them hear
The footsteps of angels drawing near.

. . . . . .

"The day that we dreamed of comes at length,
When tired of every mocking quest,
And broken in spirit and shorn of strength,
We drop at the door of rest,
And wait and watch as the day wanes on—
But the angels we meant to call are gone!"

Of all her poems doubtless the most popular in the South was *The Shade of the Trees,* which appeared in *Cartoons.* The verses commemorate the death of Stonewall Jackson (1863), whose last words were so significant: "Let us pass over the river and rest under the shade of the trees." Here, in this poem, is a most artistic use of the expression. How deep the emotion must have been with which those who had known the leader read these words, we of a later generation, both North and South, may well imagine.

"Yes, it was noblest for *him*—it was best,
(Questioning naught of our Father's decrees)
There to pass over the river and rest
Under the shade of the trees!"

Nothing has been said of Margaret Preston's faults. They were not positive. She did indeed lack somewhat in originality. Her sentiments, though lofty, are not startlingly novel. She did not endeavor to present new forms of verse; she but used the old forms skilfully. She had no great philosophy, unless it was Resignation. But, after all, the beauty of her thought and of its expression, the purity of her sentiment, the freedom from affectation and pedantry, and her ability to tell dramatically a simple story lend to her verse a quality equal if not superior to that of the poetry of any other American woman.

V

Francis Orrery Ticknor — (1822-1874)

From time to time during the war decade there appeared in Southern magazines and newspapers many short lyrical poems by Francis Orrery Ticknor (1822-1874). Little was known of the man who wrote these pleasing stanzas, and when he passed away the reading public either heard nothing of the event, or at most gave it but a passing notice. But when, in 1879, Kate Mason Rowland collected these fugitive poems in a well edited volume, the South suddenly awoke to the fact that in a quiet, unambitious sort of way a poet of no mean merit had lived and sung in its midst.

Dr. Ticknor was a native of Georgia. After having studied medicine in New York and Philadelphia, he began the practise of his profession near Columbus, Georgia, and there passed a busy and useful life as a country physician. This is the simple story of his existence. But it so happened that he was accustomed to write in verse the thoughts and

emotions which came to him in his daily rounds of duty, and it is these melodies that rescue his name from oblivion.

Some of his poems, especially those concerning the war, became favorites in the South, and were quoted throughout the entire section. Such a one was *Virginians of the Valley,* written after the Virginia soldiers had gained some ground against the Union forces. It weaves into its stanzas hints of the tradition that an order with a golden horseshoe as an emblem, had once existed in Virginia. How often indeed were the last words repeated during the dark days:

"We thought they slept! the men who kept
The names of noble sires,
And slumbered while the darkness crept
Around their vigil fires!
But aye! the golden horseshoe knights
Their Old Dominion keep,
Where foes have found enchanted ground
But not a knight asleep."

In combinations of melodious sounds he possessed that same ability noticed in so many other Southern poets; and on this score, perhaps, we can excuse Hayne's enthusiastic statement that Ticknor was "one of the truest and sweetest lyric poets this country has yet produced." But there is more than music in his verse. Oftentimes there is a deal of fire and vim in these lyrics. Notice in *Little Giffen* the dramatic abruptness with which this story of a wounded boy is told, how in reading one almost forgets the rhyme and rhythm in the eagerness to hear the story. True art does not display its art.

"Out of the focal and foremost fire,
Out of the hospital walls as dire;
Smitten of grapeshot and gangrene,
(Eighteenth battle and *he* sixteen:)
Specter: such as you seldom see,
Little Giffen of Tennessee!

. . . . . .

"Word of gloom from the war, one day;
Johnson pressed at the front, they say.
Little Giffen was up and away;
A tear—his first—as he bade good-by,
Dimmed the glint of his steel-blue eye.
'I'll write if spared!' There was news of the fight;
But none of Giffen!—He did not write."

The same intensity might be illustrated by others of his simple, ballad-like poems—*Loyal,* for instance:

"Where leads my Lord of Bruce, the Sword
Of Douglas shall not stay!
Forward! and to the feet of Christ
I follow thee today.

"The casket flashed! The Battle clashed,
Thundered and rolled away.
And dead above the Heart of Bruce
The heart of Douglas lay."

Ticknor is known best by his war-poems; but some of his Nature-poems are of superior merit. *The Hills, Among the Birds, April Morning,* and others whose titles are significant show the man's love for those things "whose Maker and Builder is God." Here, then, we have one who wrote, and wrote well, with no hope of reward from the outside world. Many of his poems never appeared in periodicals. He sang simply because he loved to sing. Therefore, in these unaffected lines we find each thought and each emotion singularly imbued with sincerity and sweetness.

VI

John Randolph Thompson — (1823-1873)

An occasional poet, it would seem, writes with a prospect the very opposite of that of Ticknor's; for he composes for the public and knows that, if his poem be worthy, his reward will be immediate. Perhaps the best known occasional poet in Southern Literature of the war period was John Randolph Thompson (1823-1873). We hear little of this man today. His poems have not been collected,

and to many people he is but a name. Perhaps the very timeliness of his verse, a necessary quality in poetry for occasions, has brought about this condition; for sentiments of one generation may be almost incomprehensible to another generation.

Thompson was born at Richmond, Virginia, and received his collegiate education at the State University, where he also studied law. He took the usual "author's" course in opening an office and waiting for clients, and at length came to the usual wise conclusion that he was not "cut out" for a lawyer. In 1847 he became editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger,* and during the next twelve years, by means of his critical insight and wide acquaintance with literary workers, he made it one of the leading American periodicals. Among the authors whose early work found a place in its columns were Donald Mitchell, author of *Reveries of A Bachelor;* John Esten Cooke, the novelist, and the poets Cooke, Hayne, and Timrod.

Magazine-editing was indeed the very field for him. But, as fate would have it, his health became so impaired that he had to go farther south, and for a time we find him editing *The Southern Field and Fireside* at Augusta, Georgia. In 1863 he went to England, and during the several years spent abroad he frequently contributed to such magazines as *Cornhill* and *Blackwood's.* His health improved; he returned to New York; he became literary editor of the *New York Evening Post;* his ability as a writer was winning recognition, and then in 1872 came another physical collapse. A trip to Colorado did but little good, and, having returned to New York, he died there in 1873.

He was in many ways a most brilliant man. As a lecturer he had a great fund of information which

made him a remarkably instructive talker, while his gentle, genial manner made him at all times exceedingly attractive and entertaining. Doubtless the best summary ever given of the personal characteristics of Poe is to be found in Thompson's often repeated address, *The Life and Character of Edgar A. Poe.* His opinions as a critic were of value. The acuteness of his work along this line was often remarked upon, while the editors of the *Evening Post* declared that no man had ever filled the position of literary editor more acceptably. But his work as a poet was more admired. Today we may find his poems only after search in old files of newspapers and magazines, especially *The Southern Literary Messenger* and *The Land We Love;* but in his time, after he had recited them before various public assemblies, they were known throughout the entire South. Two notable ones were *Virginia* (1856), a tribute to the Old Dominion, and *The Greek Slave* (1858), delivered at the unveiling of the statue of Washington at Richmond.

But today we remember him for three or four efforts of a different type: *The Battle Rainbow, Stuart, Ashby,* and that still widely read poem, *Music in Camp. The Battle Rainbow* is based on the fact that just before the Seven Days' Battle near Richmond (1862) a huge rainbow spanned the line of the Confederate camp.

"Not yet, oh not yet, as a sign of release,
Had the Lord set in mercy his bow in the cloud;
Nor yet had the Comforter whispered of peace
To the hearts that around us lay bleeding and bowed.

"But the promise was given—the beautiful arc,
With its brilliant confusion of colours that spanned
The sky on that exquisite eve, was the mark
Of the Infinite Love over-arching the land."

Who has not read *Music in Camp?*—how the two armies lay on opposite sides of the stream; a band began to play; and

"Down flocked the soldiers to the banks
Till, margined by its pebbles,
One wooded shore was blue with 'Yanks,'
And one was gray with 'Rebels.'

"Then all was still and then the band,
With movement light and tricksy,
Made stream and forest, hill and strand
Reverberate with 'Dixie.'

. . . . . .

"Again a pause, and then again
The trumpets pealed sonorous,
And 'Yankee Doodle' was the strain
To which the shore gave chorus.

. . . . . .

"And yet once more the bugle sang
Above the stormy riot;
No shout upon the evening rang—
There reigned a holy quiet."

For *Home, Sweet Home* was now the melody, and, as though by magic, each soldier saw

"The cottage neath the live-oak trees,
The cabin by the prairie."

There is always a careful finish in Thompson's verse, and he frequently makes melodious and telling expressions. Note these lines from *Ashby:*

"Never more, alas! shall sabre
Gleam around his crest;
Fought his fight; fulfilled his labour;
Stilled his manly breast.
All unheard sweet Nature cadence
Trump of fame and voice of maidens,
Now he takes his rest."

Notice, also, these words from *The Battle Rainbow:*

"Then a long week of glory and agony came—
Of mute supplication and yearning and dread;
When day unto day gave the record of fame,
And night unto night gave the list of its dead."

Depth of thought was not Thompson's. Instead, like most poets of occasion, he sought grace, agility, timeliness. These qualities he did indeed possess; and they charmed his many hearers. But his fame largely passed away with his audience.

VII

James Barron Hope
—
(1827-1887)

A name often seen in *The Southern Literary Messenger* during Thompson's editorship was "Henry Ellen." It was under this pen-name that James Barron Hope (1827-1887) did his earliest work, and it was *The Southern Literary Messenger* and some Baltimore newspapers that gave him the first opportunity to contribute his verses to American Literature. He was born at Norfolk, Virginia. After graduating at William and Mary College (1847), he practised law; but perhaps he gave more genuine zeal to his literary efforts than to his legal ones. He was well known under the name of Henry Ellen several years before the Civil War. With the outbreak of this national slaughter, he entered the Confederate army and served until the surrender. Like Lee, he turned from war to become an educator, and, having been appointed superintendent of schools at Norfolk, he soon became one of the leaders in his work. While yet a teacher he established *The Landmark* at Norfolk, and was its editor throughout the remainder of his life.

During all these busy years he had found time to contribute frequently to magazines, while his ability as a poet for occasions caused many demands for such verse. He was invited by Congress to deliver an address on the hundredth anniversary of the surrender of Cornwallis, and the result was his *Arms and the Man,* a poem of such breadth of vision and

beauty of thought that thousands who had considered him only an elegant poetizer were compelled to see in him a poet of genuine power. In 1857 he recited a poem in commemoration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of Jamestown; in 1858 he recited his *Ode* at the dedication of the Washington monument at Richmond; and in 1887, not long before he died, he wrote his *Memorial Ode* for the laying of the corner-stone of the Lee monument, Richmond. The very first of such poems written by him was good, but each effort showed added power, and the last one, *Memorial Ode,* is considered by many critics as one of the very best of its kind ever composed by an American. It was in 1857 that his first collection of verse appeared, under the title *Leoni di Monota.* This was followed by *Elegiac Ode and Other Poems* and a novel, *Under the Empire.* These volumes, with several uncollected poems, constitute a work that is notable rather for quality than for quantity.

Of all of Hope's poems the one most famous in his day was *The Charge at Balaklava.* Taking the same subject as Tennyson did in *The Charge of the Light Brigade,* he wrought a narrative not so terse as that of the great Poet-Laureate, but yet very little inferior in spirit, and with much more portrayal of the battle-scene. Here, in this effort, is a strange mingling of many passions. To see the force of the story, the entire poem should be read; for Hope's poetry does not lend itself well to minute extracts. His thoughts are always closely woven, depending upon one another. But note one or two sentiments from *The Charge at Balaklava.* Here is the impatience for battle:

> "All that morning they had waited,
> As their frowning faces showed:
> Horses stamping, riders fretting,
> And their teeth together setting,
> Not a single sword-blade wetting,
> As the battle ebbed and flowed."

Then comes the charge:

"Brightly gleam six hundred sabres,
And the brazen trumpets ring;
Steeds are gathered, spurs are driven
And the heavens wildly riven
With a mad shout upward given,
Scaring vultures on the wing."

Then comes the horror of battle:

"And tonight the moon shall shudder
As she looks down on the moor
Where the dead of hostile races
Slumber, slaughtered in their places;
All their rigid, ghastly faces
Spattered hideously with gore."

It was this strong description of human bravery that made Hope's name known abroad. For Queen Victoria greatly admired the poem, and made personal efforts to see that it was copied widely throughout Great Britain.

But the passion displayed in this piece is not exceptional in his work. The same fervor is found in many of his stanzas, especially in those delivered on public occasions. This emotionalism makes him at times a little too declamatory; but when we remember the themes and the occasions, we may look upon this defect as slight. In the main, he possesses an effective simplicity and dignity, and an ever present forcefulness cannot be denied him. For an instance of this dignity and simplicity, take but a stanza from his poem delivered before the Memorial Shaft to the Confederate Dead, at Warrenton, Virginia:

"We come to raise this mournful shaft
Above the consecrated dust
Of heroes who laid down their lives
For what they deemed most just."

Suggestiveness, or significance, of thought is essential in every really great poem. Hope was

indeed strikingly original in this trait. As, in *Arms and the Man,* he sweeps broadly over the history of America, he exclaims:

"I see great Shapes in vague confusion march
Like giant shadows, moving vast and slow,
Beneath some torch-lit temple's mighty arch
Where long processions go.

"I see these Shapes before me all unfold,
But ne'er can fix them on the lofty wall,
Nor tell them, save as she of Endor told
What she beheld to Saul."

Again, in the *Memorial Ode* there are the germs of many thoughts in such lines as these:

"Our history is a shining sea
Locked in by lofty land,
And its great Pillars of Hercules
Above the shifting sand
I here behold in majesty
Uprising on each hand.

. . . . . .

"The Father of his Country
Stands above that shut-in sea.
A glorious symbol to the world
Of all that's great and free;
And today Virginia matches him—
And matches him with Lee."

Turning once more to *Arms and the Man,* we find in Hope's comparison of the origins of the North and South, a most significant fact—one, indeed, that caused a lack of mutual understanding, a bitterness, and a warfare that shook the very foundations of the American commonwealth.

"At Plymouth Rock a handful of brave souls,
Full-armed in faith, erected home and shrine,
And flourished where the wild Atlantic rolls
Its pyramids of brine.

. . . . . .

"Soft ease and silken opulence they spurned;
From sands of silver, and from emerald boughs
With golden ingots laden full, they turned
Like Pilgrims under vows.

. . . . . .

"Then sweeping down below Virginia's capes,
From Chesapeake to where Savannah flows,
We find the settlers laughing 'mid their grapes
And ignorant of snows.

. . . . . .

"Kind skies above them, under foot rich soils;
Silence and Savage at their presence fled;
This Giant's Causeway, sacred through their toils,
Resounded at their tread."

Here, then, we have broadness and some depth of thought—a type of poet found in only the greater few. It may have been observed, also, in the specimens given above, that Hope had no mean talent in description. In this, as our study has shown, he but exemplifies a common trait of Southern Literature; for not only in the poetry, but in the fiction and oratory as well, the effect of the luxuriant environment bestowed by Nature is very noticeable. The exceptional scenes of life are touched upon in *The Charge at Balaklava;* but for the enthusiasm of a lover of every-day life, the beauties that we mortals pass so blindly, we should read *Three Summer Studies.* Just a stanza from each should convince one that Hope had genius in this particular line. From *Morning* take these words:

"The dew is thick upon the velvet grass—
The porch-rails hold it in translucent drops,
And as the cattle from th' enclosure pass,
Each one, alternate, slowly halts and crops
The tall, green spears, with all their dewy load,
Which grow beside the well-known pasture-road."

And here is a picture of noon:

"Over the farm is brooding silence now,
No reaper's song, no raven's clangour harsh—
No bleat of sheep, no distant low of cow,
No croak of frogs within the spreading marsh,
No bragging cock from litter'd farm-yard crows,
The scene is steep'd in silence and repose."

Who has not seen the summer evening storm?

"The air of evening is intensely hot,
The breeze feels heated as it fans my brows,
Now sullen rain-drops patter down like shot,
Strike in the grass, or rattle 'mid the boughs,
A sultry lull, and then a gust again,
And now I see the thick-advancing rain."

Hope was a poet who might have accomplished great works, if his whole energy had been given to the production of poetry. For, after all, a genius is a man who gives his entire strength to that task for which he is best suited. In other words, he is a believer and follower of the doctrine of concentrated energy. But the war came on when Hope was advancing to his own, and for five years the development of the poetic faculty was suspended. Then came the call to work in many capacities for the prostrated South—too many, in fact. Perhaps the words on his tomb have, in the very number of them, a certain sad significance: "Poet, Patriot, Scholar, and Journalist, and Knightly Virginia Gentleman."

VIII

Let us remember in all this study that the poetry of the South, and the greater part of American poetry, for that matter, has ever been effort rather than accomplishment. Judged from the standpoint of absolute literary value, that is, the standard set by the world's classical writers from Homer to Browning, few American writers and fewer Southern writers can be called masters. But we are studying Southern Literature from a more sympathetic position; we are studying the efforts made by these writers to express what *they* saw in life, and what *their* hopes and griefs and joys and sorrows were.

We have seen that no one great thought or passion moved them all. In the two decades immediately

preceding the Civil War, the North was in the midst of a great creative impulse, a very ferment of ideas, ideals, emotions, and movements. But in the South the conditions were somewhat different. The strange philosophy of a Browning and the sledge-hammer prose of a Carlyle were not favorites with the easy-going planter. "The world went very well then" and was not at all out of joint. We find, therefore, many writers composing slight and delicate lyrics—songs not without charm and never without melody, but not compelled to utterance by overwhelming conviction. But suddenly came the rude shock of war, and when the last drop of blood had been shed, the South came forth, dazed and bewildered, to find that the former things had passed away. And with the very beginning of those darkest days came sincerity of sentiment, and the sincerest poets the South has ever produced: Timrod, Hayne, and Lanier. In these the poetry of the period finds a fitting climax.

But, before beginning the study of these men, let us take at least a glance at a few others whose work was good but not lofty, to some extent sincere, but not throbbing with thought and passion. Of these the first in order of time is John Williamson Palmer (1825-), the poet, novelist, and journalist. He was born at Baltimore and spent much of his early life in Maryland; but his later years were passed at New York City. Among his works may be mentioned *The Golden Dragon* (1853), *California and India in Romantic Aspects* (1859), and the novel, *After His Kind* (1886). But, above all, he is known for those vivid lines entitled *Stonewall Jackson's Way* (1862), a poem recited time and time again in every Confederate camp:

John Williamson Palmer — (1825-)

"Silence! Ground arms! Kneel all! Caps off!
Old Massa's going to pray.
Strangle the fool that dares to scoff;
Attention!—it's his way.
Appealing from his native sod,
In *forma pauperis* to God,
'Lay bare Thine arm! Stretch forth thy rod!
Amen!'—That's Stonewall's Way.

"He's in the saddle now, Fall in!
Steady! the whole brigade.
Hill's at the ford, cut off; we'll win
His way out, ball and blade.
What matter if our shoes are worn?
What matter if our feet are torn?
Quick step! we're with him before morn!
That's Stonewall Jackson's way."

IX

Henry Lynden Flash — (1835-)

Another poet deserving some notice is Henry Lynden Flash (1835-), a native of Ohio, but a citizen of various Southern States, especially Alabama and Texas. He was often spoken of during the war decade as a verse-writer who might some day do great things; but other pursuits engaged his attention. In spite of too much love for the melodramatic, he has written some effective lines. One of his earliest efforts to attract attention was *Love and Wrong:*

"A scoffed-at prayer, the flit of a dress,
The glance of a frenzied eye,
A sudden splash, and the moon shone out,
And the stream went murmuring by.

"And never again will I walk by the moon,
Through the oaks and chestnuts high;
For I fear to see the flit of a dress,
And the glance of a frenzied eye.

"And some may laugh and some may weep,
But as for me, I pray;
For I know that a tale of love and wrong
Will be told on the Judgment Day."

Another poem well known in former days was *What She Brought Me,* beginning with the words:

"This faded flower that you see
Was given me a year ago
By one whose little dainty hand
Is whiter than the snow."

Shadows in the Valley was another favorite:

"There's a mossy, shady valley,
Where the waters wind and flow,
And the daisies sleep in winter
'Neath a coverlid of snow;
And violets, blue-eyed violets,
Bloom in beauty in the spring,
And the sunbeams kiss the wavelets
Till they seem to laugh and sing."

Time will not permit a criticism of Flash. Let us close with a quotation from his *Stonewall Jackson:*

"O gracious God! not gainless is the loss!
A glorious sunbeam gilds thy sternest frown;
And while his country staggers 'neath the Cross,
He rises with the Crown!"

X

Abram Ryan — (1839-1886)

To mention the name of Father Abram Ryan (1839-1886) is to enlist immediately the sympathetic attention of many thousands of Americans. For his was the same power as that so often ascribed to Longfellow—the power of making people love poetry. Abram Ryan was born at Norfolk, Virginia, where, just a few weeks before, his parents had arrived from Ireland. While yet a boy he was taken to St. Louis, and there in the Catholic schools he received his education. He studied for the priesthood, and had scarcely left the institution at Niagara, New York, when he entered the Confederate army as a chaplain and served through the long campaign.

Stern in his adherence to principle, he may hardly be said to have accepted the outcome of the war. In his bitterness he said of the Union forces: "Their chariot wheels have laid waste and desolate the land, and I, for one, cannot bow and kiss the hands that have caused all this woe." Nor was his animosity diminished by the violences of the Reconstruction. With such scenes in mind, he wrote these words:

"Land where the victor's flag waves,
Where only the dead are the free!
Each link of the chain that enslaves,
But binds us to them and to thee."

It was not until years later, when the great wave of yellow fever swept over the South, and the North stretched out a helping hand, that he relented and could write with sincerity such words as his *Reunited:*

"Purer than thy own white snow,
Nobler than thy mountains' height;
Deeper than the ocean's flow,
Stronger than thy own proud might;
O Northland! to thy sisterland,
Was late thy mercy's generous deed and grand."

After the surrender he served as priest in various Southern cities, among them being Nashville, Tennessee; Knoxville, Tennessee; Augusta, Georgia; and Mobile, Alabama; and everywhere that he worked, he became known as a man of unusual brightness of mind and amazing energy. At Augusta he edited *The Banner of the South,* and thus for three years he wielded great influence over the younger generation of the New South. At length his health declined; he went for rest to the monastery near Louisville, Kentucky; and there, in 1886, he found that eternal rest for which he had so often longed.

"For which he *longed?*" you ask. Yes, persistently, most earnestly, he wished for the grave. For

he was, above all else, a man of sadness. What made him such has never been discovered, but the fact remains that amidst all his gentleness and encouragement to others, he wished to die. There seems to have been a romance in his earlier years. It is said that he and the one whom he loved, consciously, purposely gave up each other for the service of God, the one becoming a priest and the other a nun; and, without doubt, this sacrifice left permanent effects upon his soul. He speaks thus of that last meeting:

"One night in mid of May their faces met
As pure as all the stars that gazed on them.
They met to part from themselves and the world,
Their hearts just touched to separate and bleed;
Their eyes were linked in look, while saddest tears
Fell down, like rain, upon the cheeks of each:
They were to meet no more. Their hands were clasped
To tear the clasp in twain; and all the stars
Looked proudly down on them, while shadows knelt,
Or seemed to kneel around them with the awe
Evoked from any heart by sacrifice.
And in the heart of that last parting hour
Eternity was beating."

Again, in *Presentment,* he speaks of her:

"And I saw the hand with the garland,
Ethel's hand—holy and fair;
Who went long ago to the far-land
To weave me the wreath I shall wear;
And tonight I look up to the star-land
And pray that I soon may be there."

Whatever the cause, he possessed little love for life. While on a visit to Europe in 1872, he was seriously ill at Milan, and of this event he wrote:

"I nearly died, I almost touched the door
That swings between forever and no more;
I think I heard the awful hinges grate,
Hour after hour while I did weary wait
Death's coming; but alas! 'twas all in vain!
The door half opened and then closed again."

In *Death* he uses this joyful expression:

"Out of the shadows of sadness,
Into the sunshine of gladness,
Into the light of the blest;
Out of a land very dreary,
Out of the world very weary,
Into the rapture of rest."

The reason for such a persistent desire in a man of sunshiny nature is inexplicable. Perhaps it was a trait in the very framing of the man; for he declares in *Rest:*

"'Twas always so; when but a child I laid
On mother's breast
My wearied little head—e'en then I prayed—
As now—for rest."

Perhaps, then, the prevailing characteristic of Ryan's poetry is its peculiar, unaffected sadness. And yet we must not believe him a pessimist. On the contrary he was a genuine believer in the final victory of the just and righteous order of things, and he was an incessant worker toward that end. This is the truest of the true, he affirmed,

"That joy is stronger here than grief,
Fills more of life, far more of years,
And makes the reign of sorrow brief;
Gives more of smiles for less of tears.
Joy is life's tree—grief but its leaves."

Bravely he accepted grief as a fact, an element not to be ignored, and he saw in it this solace: it gives to the sufferer a noble strength. In *A Thought* he expressed the idea:

"It is a truth beyond our ken—
And yet a truth that all may read—
It is with roses as with men,
The sweetest hearts are those that bleed."

And here, too, in *Night Thoughts,* such words as the following are in no wise the weak cry of a pessimist:

"Better a day of strife
Than a century of sleep;
Give me instead of a long stream of life
The tempests and tears of the deep."

The deeds of his life were in accordance with such a philosophy. Fully awake to the interests of his fellow-men, his simple, fervent soul was easily aroused, and whenever he took sides with a cause, it was with all his heart and strength. Naturally, he sympathized with Ireland in her long-continued woes, and for her sake he wrote *Erin's Flag.* Here, indeed, is the cry of a warrior-priest:

"Lift it up! lift it up! the old banner of green!
The blood of her sons has but brightened its sheen;
What though the tyrant has trampled it down,
Are its folds not emblazoned with deeds of renown?
What though for ages it droops in the dust,
Shall it droop thus forever? No, no! God is just."

And it was this same zeal for movements which he conceived to be right that brought forth his two most famous poems, *The Conquered Banner* and *The Sword of Robert Lee.*

The first was written in the heat of the emotions produced by the surrender of Lee; and its lines, created in such sorrow, have called for words of admiration from both North and South.

"Furl that Banner, for 'tis weary;
Round its staff 'tis drooping dreary;
Furl it, fold it, it is best;
For there's not a man to wave it,
And there's not a sword to save it,
And there's not one left to lave it
In the blood which heroes gave it;
And its foes now scorn and brave it;
Furl it, hide it—let it rest!"

The Sword of Robert Lee has much of the same earnestness. Many a time its words have been repeated by those who knew and loved the leader:

"Forth from its scabbard all in vain
Bright flashed the sword of Lee;
'Tis shrouded now in its sheath again,
It sleeps the sleep of our noble slain,
Defeated, yet without a stain,
Proudly and peacefully."

It may have been noticed that there is frequently a deeply religious tone in Ryan's poetry. Just here is where some of his noblest sentiments find expression. We find here the voice of the willing martyr; here is a very joy in every sacrifice. Note how in his *Song of the Mystic* he speaks exultingly, as one rescued from the vanities of the world:

"I walk down the Valley of Silence,
Down the dim, voiceless valley—alone;
And I hear not the fall of a footstep
Around me, save God's and my own.
And the hush of my heart is as holy
As hovers where angels have flown!

. . . . . .

"I walked in the world with the worldly;
I craved what the world never gave;
And I said: 'In the world each Ideal
That shines like a star in life's way,
Is wrecked on the shores of the Real,
And sleeps like a dream in a grave.'

. . . . . .

"And I toiled on, heart-tired of the Human,
And I moaned 'mid the mazes of men,
Till I knelt long ago, at an altar,
And I heard a voice call me. Since then
I walk down the Valley of Silence
That lies far beyond mortal ken."

As Dr. Painter says, in his *Poets of the South*, "the reader seems to be moving about in cathedral glooms, by dimly lighted altars, with sad procession of ghostly penitents and mourners fading into the darkness to the sad music of lamenting choirs. But

the light which falls upon the gloom is the light of heaven, and amid tears and sighs, over farewells and crushed happiness, hope sings a vigorous though subdued strain." Many examples of Ryan's beauty of thought might be given; but all would be found to have something of the sense of mystery or unearthliness. He speaks as though all were a vague, strange dream; he is like his *Poets:*

> "They are all dreamers; in the day and night
> Ever across their souls
> The wondrous mystery of the dark or bright
> In mystic rhythm rolls."

In summing up, then, the marked characteristics of this poet, we find an unmistakable tone of sadness, an unaffected longing for death, a contrasting note of encouragement, a bold call to action, a gentle voice of meditation, an ever present elevation of thought and of sentiment, a deep religious fervor, and, with it all, a singular sweetness and power in his unstudied yet artistic expression. Spontaneous heart-felt emotions are given in fluent and melodious phrases. He does not indeed reach far heights of philosophy; nor is he a would-be solver of the mighty questions of the universe. Ever subjective, he tells not so much of the nature about him as of the nature within him. He is but the interpreter of the one human heart that he knew so well. The historian of a human soul is not soon forgotten, and such a one is Ryan. Inasmuch as he has told in musical words those emotions which come to all of us at our best moments, we have learned to love him. And it is doubtful today whether his fame has diminished one whit. On the contrary, there are indications that some of his poems are reaching a much wider audience now than ever before.

XI

Henry Timrod — (1829-1867)

The life-stories of the three Southern poets, Timrod, Hayne, and Lanier, compose some of the saddest pages in the history of American Literature; but Timrod's cup of existence was filled to the brim with by far the bitterest disappointments. Time after time the success which his genius and efforts so richly deserved was almost within his grasp, and yet as often it vanished. But, at the same time, his nature *demanded* appreciation. "Success," said his friend, Dr. Bruns, "was to him a bitter need, for not his *living* merely, but his life was staked upon it."

Henry Timrod (1829-1867) was born at Charleston, South Carolina, of cultured, versatile, and influential parents. His father, a skilled mechanic who charmed every hearer by his brilliant conversation, had, as a boy, voluntarily become a book-binder's apprentice "in order to have plenty of books to read," while the mother was so filled with sincere love for Nature that she consciously and purposely trained her boy to discern the beauties in trees and flowers, streams and skies. The child received a good elementary education in a private school at Charleston, and, when sixteen, entered the University of Georgia. Poverty prevented his finishing the four-year course, but during the time he did attend, he gained a surprisingly wide knowledge of Latin, Greek, and English Literature.

What was of greater import was the fact that while in this institution his poems first appeared in print. Not that this was his first effort in verse. As a small boy he had felt the prompting. Says his friend, Hayne, "I well remember the exultation with which he showed me one morning his earliest

consecutive attempt at verse making. Our down-east school-master, however, could boast of no turn for sentiment, and, having remarked our hobnobbing, meanly assaulted us in the rear, effectually quenching for the time all aesthetic enthusiasm." This inclination toward poetry he had inherited from his father, one of whose poems, *To Time—the Old Traveller,* Irving had declared equal to any lyric written by Tom Moore:

> "They slander thee, Old Traveller,
> Who say that thy delight
> Is to scatter ruin far and wide,
> In thy wantonness of might.
> For not a leaf that falleth
> Before thy restless wings,
> But in thy flight, thou changest it
> To a thousand brighter things."

After the college course, Timrod returned to Charleston and there took up the study of law. The usual result among would-be poet-lawyer occurred. Apparently the necessary intellectual power was his, but his ability in oratory was decidedly limited; and this, in the old days, was the lawyer's principal stock in trade. He now conceived the idea of becoming a college professor of literature—a position for which he was well fitted both by zealous study and by keen, appreciative insight; yet such a position was never offered him. Taking up private tutoring as a vocation, or, perhaps, as an avocation—for he was continually writing—he spent ten years in the school-room. That his heart was never in this work, however, may be discerned by the readiness with which he frequently hastened back to Charleston to join the circle of writers gathered at the home of William Gilmore Simms.

To his early work he had always signed the name *Aglaus,* but now as the notices of his poems became more and more favorable, he allowed their real

authorship to be known. During the decade of teaching he was a welcomed contributor to Charleston papers and to the *Southern Literary Messenger* at Richmond, and later to *Russell's Magazine* at Charleston. It was in 1860 that he collected his volume of verse, published, not in the South, but at Boston. But poetry has rarely been a paying commodity, nor was it likely to be such in the stormy season preceding the Civil War, and, therefore, though the book received many favorable comments, Timrod received few dollars.

Now came the great struggle in the nation's life. The poet was physically unable to bear arms, but, for a short time, he was in the field as a war correspondent for a Charleston paper. Even this was too much for his already weakening body, while the horrors of war stirred his sensitive nature to such a pitch as to incapacitate him for any active work; and, consequently, we find him in 1864 at Columbia as an associate-editor of the *South Carolinian*. Now indeed success seemed to be his. He married the one he had long loved, the "Saxon Kate," the fair-haired English girl whom he speaks of in several poems, and a son was born to him. The paper prospered; he established a home. In little more than a year General Sherman's army had destroyed his printing-office; his boy had died; and he found himself a destitute invalid. He sold his household belongings for food. With a strange mingling of self-pity, grim humor, and bitterness, he wrote to Hayne: "We have—let me see—yes, we have eaten two silver pitchers, one or two dozen silver forks, several sofas, innumerable chairs, and a huge—bedstead!" Now came the additional battle with death. He strove manfully to drive back the weakness that steadily crept over him; but at length he became unable to hold even the poor positions

given him. In 1867 he was sent to visit Hayne at Copse Hill, Georgia, and for a time seemed to improve greatly. But consumption gained in the battle, and shortly after his return to South Carolina he was laid to rest.

In spite of all his suffering, it was a rest for which he never longed; a healthy desire for life was ever his. As he lay dying, his sister said to him, "You will soon be at rest now." "Yes, my sister," he replied, "but love is sweeter than rest." There was in his nature, from first to last, this same sweetness of love that made everybody his friend. Weak in body, he was strong in soul. He had a certain definite ideal—to become a poet worthy of the name —and, like the hero in Browning's *Child Roland to the Dark Tower Came,* he passed through untold hardships, griefs, pain, and disappointments, and strove onward and upward. In spite of his merit and the praise which his friends bestowed upon him, he was a most modest man; indeed, if the accounts be accurate, even bashful. Hayne describes him as "shy, but neither melancholy nor morose; he was passionate, impulsive, eagerly ambitious, with a thirst for knowledge hard to satiate." Says Dr. Bruns, "In society he was the shyest and most undemonstrative of men. To a single friend whom he trusted he would pour out his inmost heart; but let two or three be gathered together, above all, introduce a stranger, and he instantly became a quiet, unobtrusive listener, though never a moody nor uncongenial one."

Such was the man; what of his work? Like the great majority of Southern poets, he was a lover of Nature, and a most sincere one. Very few are the poems that do not contain some notice of the beauties of the world about him. For him, as he says in *Katie,*

"The blackbird from a neighboring thorn
With music brims the cup of morn,
And in a thick, melodious rain,
The mavis pours her mellow strain!"

None but a poet filled with a passion for the "visible forms" about him could have written so truly, so lovingly of Nature as he has done in many a stanza. His is not the general and rather vague admiration that is exemplified in *Thanatopsis;* instead, he speaks of scenes and objects with lingering detail. Note these lines from *The Summer Bower:*

"Trees of the soberest hues, thick-leaved and tall,
Arch it o'er-head and column it around,
Framing a covert, natural and wild,
Domelike and dim, though nowhere so enclosed
But that the gentlest breezes reach the spot
Unwearied and unweakened. Sound is here
A transient and unfrequent visitor;
. . . . . .
The turf is soft and green, but not a flower
Lights the recess, save one, star-shaped and bright—
I do not know its name—which here and there
Gleams like a sapphire set in emerald.
A narrow opening in the branched roof,
A single one, is large enough to show,
With that half glimpse a dreamer loves so much,
The blue air and the blessing of the sky."

And what tenderness there is in this man toward the unnoticed things of field and forest! Like that ideal Nature-lover, Adam Moss, in *A Kentucky Cardinal,* he cannot bear to destroy the humblest creation of God. His is the gentle thoughtfulness that forbears to crush a plant or pluck a flower. Thus, speaking of these things, in *Flower Life,* he says:

"It may be matter for a smile—
And I laughed secretly the while
I speak the fancy out—
But that they love and that they woo,
And that they often marry too,
And do as noisier creatures do,
I've not the faintest doubt.

"And so I cannot deem it right
To take them from the glad sunlight
As I have sometimes dared;
Though not without an anxious sigh
Lest this should break some gentle tie,
Some covenant of friendship, I
Had better far have spared."

But, now, there is a difference between Timrod's love of Nature and that of almost all other Southern writers; beneath its beauty he sees a *deep significance.* These lowly flowers, these lofty trees, have a message for men. His is no superficial appreciation of colors and odors. In *The Summer Bower,* after describing his rural retreat, he continues:

"Thither I always bent my idle steps,
When griefs depressed, or joys disturbed my heart,
And found the calm I looked for, or returned
With quiet rapture in my soul."

Here is the identical message of Bryant's "Go forth and list to Nature's teaching." But never was he the somewhat distant admirer that we find in Bryant, nor is there aught of sternness in his admiration; but, rather, Timrod is to Nature as the lover to his beloved—gentle, intimate, caressing. With Longfellow he seems to speak these words:

"Go to the woods and hills. No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears."

But beneath this sweetness and grace of our natural environment is the deeper character. The mountains and the valleys may indeed offer solace to him who suffers in a noble cause;

"But for the pains, the fever, and the fret
Engendered of a weak, unquiet heart,
She hath no solace; and who seeks her when
These be the troubles over which he moans,
Reads in her unreplying lineaments
Rebukes that, to the guilty consciousness,
Strike like contempt."

This distinguishing trait in Timrod's work leads us to another difference between him and the numerous minor singers about him—the unusual depth and beauty of his thought. In the specimens of his verse already cited, some idea of this may be gained; and the number of such examples might be multiplied many times. *The Past,* a widely copied poem after its appearance in the *Southern Literary Messenger,* is an illustration. It contains the Browning-like message that, in the main, we are the results of all our experiences. Our past, he declares, does not fade into nothingness:

"Ah me!—not dies—no more than spirit dies;
But in a change like death is clothed with wings;
A serious angel, with entranced eyes,
Looking to far-off celestial things."

As may be easily seen, Timrod does not speak a thought as a mere bald truth; the artist was too strong in him for that. Beauty and depth are constantly mingling traits. Thus, in one of his sonnets, he speaks in this picturesque and yet significant language:

"Life ever seems as from its present sight
It aimed to lure us. Mountains of the past
It melts, with all their crags and caverns vast,
Into a purple cloud! Across the night
Which hides what is to be, it shoots a light
All rosy with the yet unrisen dawn.
Not the nearer daisies, but yon distant height
Attracts us lying on this emerald lawn."

He at times steps out of the trodden path and shows a new and yet wholly acceptable view-point. Such a peculiarity—and it is indeed a peculiarity among Southern poets of the nineteenth century—is well illustrated in his *Hymn* sung at the consecration of Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston. Con-

trast these words with the dismal musings of Poe's *The Conqueror-Worm:*

"Thou shouldst be crowned with fadeless flowers
Of lasting fragrance and celestial hue;
Or be thy couch amid funeral bowers,
But let the stars and sunlight sparkle through."

Again, note the general fitness of the last stanza from this same poem:

"Heaven! shed thy most propitious dews around!
Ye holy stars! look down with tender eyes,
And gild and guard and consecrate the ground
Where we may rest, and whence we pray to rise."

It is this emotionalism, this colorful bedecking of a naked thought, that separates poetry from philosophy, and shows, at the same time, the great poet. Is there not more power of appeal in these lines from a Timrod sonnet than in the deepest dissertation on love?

"Ah me! why may not love and life be one?
Why walk we thus alone, when by our side
Love, like a visible God, might be our guide?
How would the marts grow noble! and the street,
Worn like a dungeon floor by weary feet,
Seem then a golden court-way of the Sun!"

The ability to see possible wonders in the commonplace things of life is an ever-present trait of a great man. A great man without an imagination is an impossibility. And what a change in the appearance of the Universe the imagination of a genius can make! This is another distinguishing feature of Timrod's poems; he sees the beauty of the common. In his sonnet to the Poet, he thus advises all verse-writers:

"Always, O bard, humility is power:
And thou mayst draw from matters of the hearth
Truth wide as nations, and as deep as love."

Again, in the same poem, he declares that

> "The brightest stars are nearest to the earth,
> And we may track the mighty sun above,
> Even by the shadow of a slender flower."

Beauty is everywhere, as Timrod sees the world. Such an imagination can paint the murky air of the dingy city itself with figures full of grace. A sonnet telling of his pent-up town-life, concludes with such a philosophy:

> "There's no unimpressive spot on earth.
> . . . . . .
> Clouds do not scorn us: yonder factory's smoke
> Looked like a golden mist when morning broke."

Perhaps the best example of Timrod's power in glorifying the commonplace is found in *The Cotton Boll.* In that really wonderful meditation he looks at the boll—a rather unattractive object to most people—and thinks of the strange power latent within it. Here, indeed, is one of the broadest sweeps of vision in all American poetry. This bit of fibre, in itself but a frail thing, rules

> "That mighty commerce which, confined
> To the mean channels of no selfish mart,
> Goes out to every shore
> Of the broad earth, and through the sea with ships
> That bear no thunders; hushes hungry lips
> In alien lands;
> Joins with a delicate web remotest strands;
> And gladdening rich and poor,
> Doth gild Parisian domes,
> Or feed the cottage-smoke of English homes,
> And only bounds its blessings by mankind."

But it must not be thought that Timrod is a mere contemplator, an ever calm philosopher. There were times in his life when emotion thrilled him with a contagious vigor, and at such moments he poured

forth a torrent of surging words. It is a great step between such a stanza as

> "There's a maiden, and her name is . . .
> Hist! was that a rose-leaf fell?
> See, the rose is listening, Lily,
> And the rose may tell."

and his words to the Spirit of Storm:

> "Come down in thy strength on the deep!
> Worse dangers there are in life,
> When the waves are still, and the skies look fair,
> Than in their wildest strife."

The extraordinary energy of expression seen in some of Timrod's poems is one of the many literary results of the Civil War. No man in America has excelled him in these few martial songs, written, for the most part, near the beginning of the long struggle. And, in fact, it was these war lyrics that gained for him his greatest audiences. The spirit of *Carolina* and *A Cry to Arms* enforced attention. There was a fierce demand in such words as these:

> "Ho! woodsmen of the mountain side!
> Ho! dwellers in the vales!
> Ho! ye who by the chafing tide
> Have roughened in the gales!
> Leave barn and byre, leave kin and cot,
> Lay by the bloodless spade;
> Let desk and case and counter rot,
> And burn your books of trade."

And *Carolina,* a poem long read by hearth and by campfire—what intensity is in it!

> "I hear a murmur as of waves
> That grope their way through sunless caves,
> Like bodies struggling in their graves,
> Carolina!
>
> "And now it deepens; slow and grand
> It swells, as rolling to the land,
> An ocean broke upon the strand.
> Carolina!"

The man who can write thus effectively does not do so by chance; technical skill is necessary. Timrod has a passion for perfection. No matter how deep the truth or how mighty the emotion that he expresses, the artist is always present, and the roughness of a bare thought gives place to the polished utterance of a deep sentiment. Truth and Beauty join efforts in nearly all that he has written. Of course Timrod realizes that poetry is not a mere matter of artistic expression. In one of his earliest efforts, *A Vision of Poetry,* he embraces under the subjects fit for verse

> "All lovely things, and gentle—the sweet laugh
> Of children, girlhood's kiss, and friendship's clasp,
> The boy that sporteth with the old man's staff,
> The baby, and the breast its fingers clasp—
> All that exalts the ground of happiness,
> All griefs that hallow, and all joys that bless."

A believer in inspiration, he at the same time sees the need of patient toil. He recognizes both the moment "when the great thought strikes for the first time along the brain and flushes the cheek with the sudden revelation of beauty or grandeur, and the hour of patient, elaborate execution." Hence there are at all times in his work absolute clearness and a remarkable melody; the thought and the expression are at all times worthy of one another.

That he understood exactly through what principles he might gain artistic effects, may be seen in his own explanation of the science of poetry. Says he, "However abstract be his thought, the poet is compelled by his passion-fused imagination to give it life, form, or color. Hence the necessity of employing the sensuous or concrete words of the language." The following of this theory led, of course, to that beauty, imagery, and picturesqueness which lift Timrod so far above the ordinary

rhyme-maker. He was something of a master of words and, with Tennysonian art, he has built a few notable structures of verbal melody. He summons to his assistance every possible means—imagery, figures of speech, archaic words, bold comparisons:

". . . . Above I saw
. . . . . .
The pallid sky look through a glazed mist
Like a blue eye in death."

So successfully does he follow his ideas that at times the verse is indeed "colorless, sculptural, Poean, and you forget the fact of reading, so wonderfully does the thought become an almost visible presence." Simplicity and grandeur are well mingled in him. His *Ode* delivered during the decoration of graves in Magnolia Cemetery in 1867, is considered by many critics as one of the nearest approaches to perfection in American poetry; and it is this same simplicity, mingled with loftiness of sentiment, that gains the strong effect here. The opening lines show the nature of the piece:

"Sleep sweetly in your humble graves,
Sleep, martyrs to a fallen cause;
Though yet no marble column craves
The pilgrim here to pause."

The last stanza is even more worthy of admiration:

"Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!
There is no holier spot of ground
Than where defeated valor lies,
By mourning beauty crowned."

This, says Prof. W. P. Trent, in his *Life of William Gilmore Simms,* "approximates perfection,—the perfection of Collins, not that of Lovelace." And, again, in this same poem, may be noted another happy trait of Timrod's—the felicity of thought at the very beginning and at the very end of his poems.

Thus a double advantage is gained; for the attention is quickly attracted, while at the last the thought lingers in the mind.

Timrod, again like Tennyson, essays many forms of verse, and for the most part is highly successful in his varied efforts. Undoubtedly his sonnets are among the very best in American Literature. They have the proper concentration, the extreme neatness of thought, and the ever-evident trend toward the final climax so necessary in this most difficult and artificial type of poetry. Aside from his admiration for this form, he seems to prefer the simple three and four line stanzas; and these indeed fit well the sweet simplicity of his thoughts and sentiments. That he was influenced in this simplicity, as well as in other traits, by the Romantic movement and early Victorian literature, is very apparent. His Nature poems show something of his study of Wordsworth; his art, as has been mentioned, is distinctly Tennysonian. But the *spirit* of it all is ever his own.

True, impassioned, musical, he is deserving of all the praise that has been his. And in later years the amount has not been small nor the spirit of it unenthusiastic. "Timrod's," says Professor Trent, "was probably the most finely endowed mind to be found in Carolina, or indeed in the whole South at this period." Richard Henry Stoddard speaks of him as "the ablest poet the South has yet produced." Whether or not, as we remember Lanier, this statement sounds a little extravagant, it at least shows the growing spirit in regard to the man. Timrod seems at last to be coming to his own. His rightful heritage of fame has long been delayed; but time brings in due season rewards to the just.

> "In seeds of laurel in the earth
> The blossom of your fame is blown,
> And somewhere, waiting for its birth,
> The shaft is in the stone!"

XII

Paul Hamilton Hayne — (1830-1886)

The world knew far more of Paul Hamilton Hayne (1830-1886) during his life-time than it did of Timrod. In fact, his merit was recognized to an extent seldom known to writers from the South. Yet, the story of his life is of the same suffering and sorrow as are the stories of his friends, Timrod and Lanier. He was born at Charleston, South Carolina, of a family noted for its political and social influence. Early in the boy's life, his father, a navy officer, died, and Hayne went to the home of his uncle, Robert Y. Hayne. There, with an inherited fortune of his own and with the wealth of his noted relative at his command, he had full opportunity to develop the talents that were his; and we find him receiving the best in education that Charleston could offer. After graduating from Charleston College, he took the inevitable course in law, and, of course, never practised it. The one work that he loved was that of writing; for his words in *The Will and the Wing* were indeed true to his ambition:

> "Yet would I rather in the outward state
> Of Song's immortal temple lay me down,
> A beggar basking by that radiant gate
> Than bend beneath the haughtiest empire's crown."

He became one of the editors of *The Southern Literary Gazette,* published at Charleston; then followed his editorship of *Russell's Magazine,* at Charleston; while at all times his contributions were welcomed by *The Southern Literary Messenger.*

Those early years of life must have been very happy ones. In 1852 he married the beloved woman to whom several of his poems were addressed; his fortune was ample; his social and literary environments were most pleasant; he had the friendship of

such men as Simms, Poe, Timrod, and several other great American writers; and, undisturbed, he was producing work of a noble quality. But, with the coming of the war, such days ceased. Too frail to bear arms, he joined the staff of Governor Pickens, but ill health forced him to resign; in the bombardment of Charleston his home and library were destroyed; the family silver, all of great value, was swept away in Sherman's March to the Sea; and at the close of the great conflict the poet found himself an invalid with a family to support and yet with absolutely no means of support.

He soon left Charleston and went to the barren pine-bluffs near Augusta, Georgia, and there on a piece of land which was given the name "Copse Hill" he erected a humble cottage. It must have been a painful contrast—the luxurious home in a cultured city and this rude hut in a forest wilderness. He wrote of the place: "Our little apology for a dwelling was perched on the top of a hill, overlooking in several directions hundreds of leagues of pine barren; there was as yet neither garden nor enclosure near it, and a wilder, more desolate, and savage-looking home could hardly have been seen east of the prairies." Everything was stinted in that home. The fare was of the cheapest; the furniture was largely home-made. Many of the poet's best productions were written at a desk made of a work-bench left by the carpenters. But, yet, the artistic character of the ever cheerful wife transformed the place. Pictures from art-magazines, and many hand-made ornaments stole away the barrenness of the interior. Born into luxury and high culture, this wonderful helpmate did the cooking and the family washing! Well might Hayne speak of her in *The Bonny Brown Hand:*

> "That little hand, that fervent hand of bonny brown,
> The hand which points the path to Heaven, yet makes
> A Heaven of earth."

And, too, his friendships were comforting. Many of his old acquaintances visited him from time to time, notably Timrod, of whom he speaks in *Under the Pines:*

> "O Tree! against thy mighty trunk he laid
> His weary head; thy shade
> Stole o'er him like the first cool spell of sleep!
> It brought a peace *so* deep,
> The unquiet passion died from out his eyes,
> As lightnings from stilled skies."

Now and then he received letters from men of international fame—Longfellow, Whittier, Bayard Taylor, Swinburne, and many others, and added to these messages were many words of gratitude from readers of his poems. One man wrote that he had been saved from suicide by reading the *Lyric of Action;* a little boy saved five dollars and sent it with the request that some daily reminder be bought with it. His poems, too, were gaining a more than sectional fame. *Poems* (1855), *Sonnets and Other Poems* (1857), and *Avolio and Other Poems* (1859) had been widely noticed, and his war poems, though not so spirited as Timrod's, had done much to arouse the South, and were, of course, widely known. Now from this silent isolated spot, he sent forth such works as *Legend and Lyrics* (1872), the edition of Timrod's *Poems, The Mountain of the Lovers and Other Poems* (1875), *Life of Robert Y. Hayne* (1878), *Life of Hugh S. Legare* (1878), the *Complete Edition* of 1882, and many essays and poems never collected.

Yet, all these endeavors brought him but little money, and his constant air of cheerfulness must, at times, have been affected. His education had created in him many tastes which now went unsatisfied—the love of books, art, music, and cultured companions; and the wilderness could offer none of these. Moreover, he was constantly growing weaker in body,

and he realized that death was not distant. But one of his sonnets contains these words:

"Here far from worldly strife and pompous show,
The peaceful seasons glide serenely by,

. . . . . .

Fields, lonely paths, the one small glimmering rill
That twinkles like a wood-fay's mirthful eye,
Under moist bayleaves, clouds fantastical
That float and change at the light breeze's will,—
To me, thus lapped in sylvan luxury,
Are more than death of kings or empires' fall."

Thus the years passed. Perhaps such a life was not destructive to his genius; for he was ever a dreamer, ready to say,

"Let the world roll blindly on!
Give me shadow, give me sun,
And a perfumed eve as this is."

The end of the struggle came July 6, 1886. He, too, like Timrod, had a strong love for life. "Behold," said he,

"Behold! who knows what soul-dividing bars
Earth's faithful loves may part in other stars?
Nor can love deem the face of death is fair:
A little while I still would linger here."

Like the majority of the Southern poets, Hayne did not use poetry as a means of inculcating a philosophy. Verse was to him almost entirely a matter of emotions. And what a variety of sentiments he touched upon! Dealing mainly with familiar objects and scenes, he told simply what he *felt,* and, because he felt intensely, he was effective in communicating his emotions. The words of Edwin P. Whipple concerning *Legends and Lyrics* might be applied to the greater part of Hayne's work: "It contains the ripest results of the genius of the most eminent of living Southern poets. . . . . We cannot see that the American poet is one whit

inferior to his accomplished English contemporary in tenderness and ideal charm, while we venture to say he has more than Morris the true poetic enthusiasm and unwithholding abandonment to the sentiment suggested by his themes."

During the war period his poems did much for the cause of the Confederacy; but few, if any, of these battle-lyrics have the strength and fierceness of Timrod's efforts during the same period. Hayne, like Longfellow, had the greater smoothness and beauty; but Timrod, like Whittier, had the greater ruggedness and vigor. True, Hayne produced some rather thrilling songs; as, for instance, *The Black Flag:*

"Then up with the sable banner!
Let it thrill to the War-God's breath,
For we march to the watchword—Vengeance!
And we follow the captain—Death!"

But this was not the true Hayne. His was not the spirit of a reformer, but, rather, of a dreamer in love with his fancies. Far more natural for him are such words as those in *Cloud Pictures,* when, looking upon the sky, he sees

"Castles, with guarded roof, and turret tall,
Great sloping archway, and majestic wall,
Sapped by the breezes to their noiseless fall!

"Pagodas vague! above whose towers outstream
Banners that wave with motions of a dream—
Rising or drooping in the noontide gleam;

"Gray lines of Orient pilgrims, a gaunt band
On famished camels, o'er the desert sand
Plodding toward their prophet's Holy Land."

There is nearly always mingled with this sentiment a wistfulness almost melancholy, and no doubt such a trait was very natural to a man, hungering, as he surely did, for those greater gifts which education had trained him to enjoy.

"I pine for beauty; beauty of fresh mien,
And gentle utterance, and the charm serene,
Wherewith the hue of mystic dreamland glows;
I pine for lulling music, the repose
Of low-voiced waters, in some realm between
The perfect Adenne and this clouded scene
Of love's sad loss, and passion's mournful throes."

And yet, it must not be thought that he is a discontented weakling, longing for eternal ease. He possesses a surprising firmness of soul, and, coupled with this trait, is an unwavering faith in a divine guidance. *On the Decline of Faith* is an admirable illustration of this simple trust. Note but these lines from the poem:

"O man! when faith succumbs, and reason reels,
Turn to thy heart that reasons not but feels.
Creeds change; shrines perish; still (her instinct saith)
Still the soul, the soul must conquer Death,
Hold fast to God, and God will hold thee fast."

His *Lyric of Action* should delight every admirer of sturdy manhood. Persevering vigor sounds through every line of it, and, coming, as it does, from a man reduced from great wealth to great poverty and exiled from refined, congenial company to a silent wilderness, the poem should stand as one of the most remarkable exhortations in American Literature.

"'Tis the part of a coward to brood
O'er the past that is withered and dead:
What though the heart's roses are ashes and dust?
What though the heart's music be fled?
Still shine the grand heavens o'er head,
Where the voice of an angel thrills clear on the soul,
'Gird about thee thine armor, press on to the goal!'"

Margaret Preston has said of Hayne: "There is no poet in America who has written more lovingly or discriminatingly about Nature in her varying aspects." Doubtless these words are true, especially the expression "discriminatingly," for more than

Timrod he is a lover of *certain special forms* of Nature. How often, for instance, does he write of the pine-tree: *Under the Pine, The Pine's Mystery, The Voice in the Pines, The Dryad of the Pine, Aspect of the Pines*—these, and many others, tell of the mysterious charm that the tree possesses for him.

"Passion and mystery murmur through the leaves,
Passion and mystery, touched by deathless pain—
Whose monotone of long, low anguish grieves
For something lost that shall not live again!"

And just here is another difference between Hayne and other Southern poets; he seems to stand in awe before Nature. Beneath the sweet scenes and sounds and odors there is a depth of mystery that he cannot quite fathom. As he says, he hears

"Low words of alien music, softly sung,
And rhythmic sighs in some sweet unknown tongue."

Yet, he is at all times very close to the concrete elements of Nature. Hamilton Mabie has said of him: "He touched the two themes which lay deepest in his heart, love of nature and love of the personal ideals of the Old South, with perfect sincerity, with deep tenderness, and with lyric sweetness." But evidently it is in the expression of the first of these themes that he is happiest. Such descriptions as *In the Wheat Field:*

"Hark! to the droning of drowsy wings,
To the honey-bees as they go and come,
To the 'boomer' scarce rounding his sultry rings,
The gnat's small horn and the beetle's hum;
And hark to the locust!—noon's one shrill song,
Like the tingling steel of an elfin gong
Grows lower through quavers of long retreat
To swoon on the dazzled and distant wheat."

and *The Mocking Bird:*

"It rose in dazzling spirals overhead,
Whence to wild sweetness wed,

Poured marvellous melodies, silvery trill on trill;
The very leaves grew still
On the charmed trees to hearken; while for me,
Heart-trilled to ecstasy,
I followed."

and *Aspect of the Pines:*

"Tall, sombre, grim, against the morning sky
They rise, scarce touched by melancholy airs,
Which stir the fadeless foliage dreamfully,
As if from realms of mystical despairs."

Such descriptions as these are from a man whose acquaintance with trees and flowers, mountains and valleys is most intimate. How tenderly he speaks of various plants; the spirea, for instance, in his poem by that name:

"So rare, so soft, its blossoms seem
Half-woven of moonshine's misty bars,
And tremulous as the tender gleam
Of the far Southland stars."

But why continue the list? His poems of Nature have called forth words of admiration from numerous critics. The words of Maurice Thompson concerning *Muscadines* may fairly be applied to not a few of these descriptions: "What luxury of Southern sights, sounds, tastes, perfume, and colors we enjoy in his poem, *Muscadines,* than which no lesser genius than Shelley or Keats ever penned a better or a richer." Surely, the lonely poet, living amid the pine barrens of the Georgia hills, is sincere when he exclaims:

"The great constellations rose and set:
I knew them all, and worshipped all I knew;
Yet, from their empire in the pregnant blue
Sweeping from planet-orbits to faint bars
Of nebulous cloud beyond the range of stars,
I turned to worship with a heart as true,
Long mosses drooping from the cypress-tree."

No study of Hayne's poetry would be complete without some notice of his mastery of technique. Perhaps such expressions as "starry sparkles of still bliss," "purple-vestured mood," and "troublous dreams" are rather affected; perhaps the claim that his poetry is often diffuse is not without foundation; but, with the possible exception of such minor faults, Hayne's work is highly excellent in its mere make-up. From the earliest days of his literary career until his last moment he was by far the severest critic of his own writing, and although he always wrote in the fever of inspiration, grasping the paper or the book nearest at hand in order to record the fleeting thought, he revised everything with such laborious, almost painful care that no uncouth, straggling expression left his hands.

Unlike Poe and Lanier, he attempts no new theories of verse; but, accepting the well tried methods, he shows genius, not in the novelty of his mode of expression, but in the moving power of it. That he could write a good ballad is proved by his vigorous *MacDonald's Raid:*

> "With this long, hissing sweep
> I have smitten full many a foeman with sleep—
> That forlorn, final sleep: God! what memories cling
> To those gallant old times when we fought 'gainst the King!"

That he could tell a good metrical tale is evidenced in *The Wife of Brittany* or in the beautiful legend, *Aethra.* But above all else he was a *lyric* poet. He will longest claim our attention not as a describer of beautiful scenes or teacher of philosophical formulas, but as an expresser of sentiment. He is especially happy in his sonnets, of which Maurice Thompson has said that he could pick out twenty "the equal of almost any in our language." Absolutely without grossness, so delicate in his feelings and manners as to be distinctly feminine in some traits, so true to

his ideals as to be the only American of the nineteenth century to dedicate his life to poetry, he must in the very nature of justice win a greater fame. For, as Herman Grimm, the eminent German scholar, has pointed out, "the circle which the poems embrace is great, and the poet's spirit is everywhere at home."

XIII

Sidney Lanier — (1842-1881)

In his early manhood Sidney Lanier wrote these words in his note-book: "The prime inclination—that is, natural bent (which I have checked, though),—of my nature is to music, and for that I have the greatest talent, indeed, not boasting, for God gave it me, I have an extraordinary musical talent, and feel it within me plainly that I could rise as high as any composer." His words are true. If he had not become a poet he might have become an eminent musician. The ability was inherited through many generations; for as far back as the time of James I we find one of his ancestors "master of the king's music." In his novel, *Tiger-Lilies,* he exclaims: "Since in all holy worship, in all conditions of life, in all domestic, social, religious, political, and lonely, individual doings, in all passions, in all countries, earthly or heavenly, in all stages of civilization of time or of eternity; since, I say, in all these, music is always present to utter the shallowest or the deepest thoughts of man or spirit—let us cease to call music a fine art, to class it with delicate pastry, cookery, and confectionery, and to fear to make too much of it lest it should make us sick." Music was to him the world's highest gift. And, luckily for literature, he turned this spirit of melody into poetry.

Lanier had in his nature the traits of two nations noted for their strength and sentiment: the Huguenot and the Scotch. Born at Macon, Georgia, in 1842, he spent most of his boyhood amidst surroundings very conducive to that refinement and culture which the slavery system made possible for the higher classes of society. Very early in his childhood he showed his remarkable aptitude for music, and learned, almost entirely without instruction, to play numerous instruments—one, the flute, so well that in after years he was considered by many musicians the best flute-player in America. At the age of fifteen he entered Oglethorpe College, near Milledgeville, Georgia, an institution utterly unworthy of the name "college." There he gained, through his own investigation, considerable knowledge of the later writers of English Literature. There, too, the associations were pleasant in various ways. A classmate, describing the evenings spent together, says, "We would read from some treasured volume, it may have been Tennyson or Carlyle, or Christopher North's *Noctes Ambrosianae,* or we would make the hours vocal with music and song. . . . On such occasions I have seen him walk up and down the room and with his flute extemporize the sweetest music ever vouchsafed to mortal ear."

After his graduation he was given an instructorship in the institution; but within six months the Civil War began and soon he was marching with a Georgia regiment toward the scene of conflict in Virginia. He saw much hard service and was several times offered promotion; but because he did not wish to be separated from his brother, he refused all offices. During the last two years he was placed in a signal corps—two years "passed in skirmishes, racing to escape the enemy's gunboats, signaling dispatches, serenading country beauties, poring over

chance books, and foraging for provender." But even amidst such exciting scenes his studious habits did not desert him. In the camp he practically mastered German, French, and Spanish, and practised most zealously on the flute.

It was in 1864 that the real misfortunes of his life began. In that year, while on board a blockade runner near Fort Fisher, he was captured and sent to the prison at Point Lookout. The privations there were great; but, fortunately, just before entering the place, he had concealed his flute in his sleeve, and music still consoled him. When, in 1865, he stepped forth from confinement, his only earthly possessions were this instrument, a twenty-dollar gold piece, and a suit of very ragged clothes. He boldly began the homeward journey on foot, and at length reached Macon so utterly worn out that he fell ill, and his life was despaired of. After a visit to Mobile Bay he was able to take a clerkship in Montgomery, Alabama. But it was not until September, 1867, that he felt strong enough to undertake heavy work. He took charge of a school at Prattville, Alabama, and within the next year married Miss Mary Day of Macon. The numerous poems mentioning this woman are sufficient evidence of the happiness of the union. In *My Springs* he thus speaks of her:

> "O Love, O wife, thine eyes are they,
> —My springs from out whose shining gray
> Issue the sweet celestial streams
> That feed my life's bright Lake of Dreams."

It was in this same year that he published his first book, *Tiger-Lilies*. This book, partially written during the war and hastily finished afterwards, is a tumultuous and exuberant prose-poem rather unworthy of such a genius. And, yet, as Professor

Baskerville declares, "few first books could be resurrected with so little drawback to the author's reputation."

Now began the vain struggle with consumption. In 1868 he gave up his school, returned to Macon, and for four years attempted to practise law with his father. But he steadily lost strength, and in 1872 he sought relief in Texas. Growing no better, Lanier resolved that henceforth every moment of his remnant of life should be given to literature and music. In 1873 he secured the position of first flute in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra of Baltimore, and there the busiest and most fruitful years of his life were spent. Lanier had been doubtful about his being able to hold such a place among musicians; but the musical genius in him made up for the lack of experience, and the position was his as long as his health permitted him to hold it. Of this engagement he afterwards wrote: "I was a raw player and a provincial withal, without practise, and guiltless of instruction—for I had never had a teacher. To go under these circumstances among old professional players, and assume a leading part in a large orchestra which was organized expressly to play the most difficult works of the great masters was (now that it is all over) a piece of temerity that I don't remember ever to have equaled before." But that his temerity was warranted may be seen in the words of Asger Hamerik, the director: "I will never forget the impression he made on me when he played the flute concerto of Emil Hartman at a Peabody Symphony concert in 1878,—his tall, handsome, manly presence; his flute breathing noble sorrows, noble joys; the orchestra softly responding. The audience was spell-bound. Such distinction, such refinement! He stood the master, the genius!"

But Lanier was giving far more attention to literature than to music. He took advantage of the libraries and of the opportunities offered by Johns Hopkins University, and made a most painstaking study of Anglo-Saxon and of the writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He once said that "the trouble with Poe was he did not *know* enough," and, realizing that a great poet must have a large fundamental knowledge in order to represent or lead the thought of the age, he himself sought zealously for scholarship. Soon he began to teach private classes, and at length, in 1879, secured a lectureship in Johns Hopkins.

The battle for existence was now at its grimmest stage. Amidst weakness and great pain, he did a marvelous amount of work—three lecture courses at girls' schools, two lecture courses at the University, frequent orchestra practises, and constant writing. Among his books of those years were *The English Novel, The Science of English Verse,* his *Mabinogion* for boys, his editions of Mallory, Froissart, and Percy, his *Boys' King Arthur,* and many poems. In 1876, he had been chosen, at the suggestion of Bayard Taylor, to write the words of the *Centennial Cantata,* and, although this verse was not of high quality, it had brought him into such prominence that all he wrote received wide notice. *Corn,* one of the most thoughtful and artistic poems ever produced in the English language, had appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine* for February, 1875. Within the next two or three years he had written such noble works as *The Song of the Chattahoochee, The Symphony, Clover, The Bee,* and *The Revenge of Hamish.*

By 1880 his battle for life was an hourly struggle. He lectured at Johns Hopkins after he was unable to stand up, and often, indeed, his classes, awed by

this exhibition of supreme will-power, feared lest the word then falling from his lips should be his last. In such suffering, even when he was too weak to feed himself, and with his fever at one hundred and four, he wrote his greatest poem, *Sunrise*. The lines of the dying man's song have rarely been equaled in American Literature.

"In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain
Of the live-oak, the marsh, and the main.
The little green leaves would not let me alone in my sleep;
Up-breathed from the marshes, a message of range and of sweep
Interwoven with waftures of wild sea-liberties, drifting,
Came through the lapped leaves sifting, sifting,
Came to the gates of sleep.
Then my thoughts, in the dark of the dungeon-keep
Of the Castle of Captives hid in the City of Sleep,
Upstarted, by twos and by threes assembling:
The gates of sleep fell a-trembling
Like as the lips of a lady that forth falter *yes*,
Shaken with happiness:
The gates of sleep stood wide."

In 1881 he was taken to the mountains of North Carolina, first near Asheville, and later at Lynn, where on September 7, the struggle was ended. His body was sent back to Baltimore, and both at his grave and in the halls of Johns Hopkins fitting memorials have been erected.

"His song was only living aloud,
His work a singing with the hand."

A few words will suffice for Lanier's prose work. The various editions of stories for boys—*King Arthur, Mabinogion, Froissart, Percy,* and others, are exceedingly pleasing in style and are still popular among young readers. His volume of lectures, *The English Novel,* is a scholarly and valuable work, attempting largely to show what personality has done for literature. Because of the very nature of this treatise he gives the highest place among Eng-

lish novelists to that woman of such remarkable personality, George Eliot, who "shows man what he may be in term of what he is." *Music and Poetry, Shakspere and His Predecessors, Retrospects and Prospects,* and his *Letters*—all collected after his death—show the same earnestness, the same endeavor to get at the truth of things, and the same charity toward the world.

Of all his prose works his *Science of English Verse* is, by far, the most valuable. Perhaps in this effort to explain the principles of poetry, he has allowed his love for music to carry him too far; but there is "method in his madness." "In all cases," he writes, "the appeal is to the ear; but the ear should, for that purpose, be educated up to the highest possible plane of culture." His theory is that *time,* and not *accent,* is the basis of poetic rhythm. Every line of verse, according to this, divides itself into measures equivalent to those in music, each measure containing a predetermined number of time units. Of course, by this scheme, verse becomes a closer companion of music, and Lanier increased the kinship by his lavish use of rhyme, assonance, and alliteration. In poetry, just as in orchestra-music, such a system allows great freedom of composition—a freedom that gains for his *Sunrise* and *The Marshes of Glynn* magnificent symphonic effects. Although the rhapsody, toward which form his later poems tend, is by no means the highest product of poetic creation, the undoubted melodious results and the lofty and noble air of uninterrupted, majestic movement, possible under such a system, will do much toward securing for the theory at least a modified acceptance.

Now, either by following this theory, or, as some unbelievers would say, in spite of it, Lanier accomplished results in descriptive and musical effects not

often equaled in American Literature. Lowell speaks of his "rare gift for the happy word." And Lanier does indeed possess remarkable discernment not only in descriptive phrases but in melodious ones as well. For instance, there is real music in these lines from one of his earlier poems, *Betrayal:*

"The sun has kissed the violet sea,
And burned the violet to a rose;
O sea! wouldst thou not better be
More violet still? Who knows? Who knows?
Well hides the violet in the wood;
The dead leaf wrinkles her a hood,
And winter's ill is violet's good;
But the bold glory of the rose,
It quickly comes and quickly goes—
Red petals whirling in white snows,
Ah me!"

And in his last works, such as *Sunrise,* the music is but increased. Indeed, his endeavor to create melodious effects is perhaps a little too evident at times, and at such moments we find some lack of spontaneity.

In descriptive work his superiors are few. *The Marsh Hymns* seem to catch the very spirit of that far stretching landscape where sea and land meet and mingle; while such an effort as the *Song of the Chattahoochee* is just as full of the hurrying, impatient movement of the mountain stream:

"Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side,
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall."

At times Lanier gains magnificent chant-like expressions, especially in his last days, after he had

definitely formulated his theory of verse. The lines have not the regularity of ordinary poetry, and, yet, note the lofty, epic effect:

"The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.
And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?"

Lanier was a firm believer not only in his call to poetry, but in his theory of the science to which he endeavored to reduce verse. His conception of the poet's position is a lofty one, as shown in the often praised lines of *Corn:*

"Look, out of line one tall corn-captain stands
Advanced beyond the foremost of his bands,
And waves his blades upon the very edge
And hottest thicket of the battling hedge.
Thou lustrous stalk, that ne'er mayst walk nor talk,
Still shalt thou type the poet-soul sublime
That leads the vanward of his timid time.
And sings up cowards with commanding rhyme—
Soul calm, like thee, yet fain, like thee, to grow
By double increment, above, below;
Soul homely, as thou art, yet rich in grace like thee,
Teaching the yeomen selfless chivalry
That moves in gentle curves of courtesy;
Soul filled like thy long veins with sweetness tense,
By every god-like sense
Transmuted from the four wild elements."

Of course such a man would never abuse his literary conscience. Even his book descriptive of Florida, gotten up for a railroad company, is so high in artistic conception that it has been called a "spiritualized guide-book." In this poet the low levels of emotion and interest find no welcome.

It has been mentioned that Lanier seems to disclose the very spirit of a subject in Nature, as, for instance, in *Song of the Chattahoochee* and his

Hymns of the Marshes. Nature is to him a most lovable but a profoundly mysterious and wonderful creation. At times, as in the opening lines of *Corn,* he finds a rapture in the various aspects of natural things:

"Today the woods are trembling through and through
With shimmering forms, and flash before my view,
Then melt in green as dawn-stars melt in blue,
The leaves that wave against my cheek caress
Like women's hands; the embracing boughs express
A subtlety of mighty tenderness;
The copse-depths into little noises start,
That sound anon like beatings of a heart,
Anon like talk 'twixt lips not far apart."

But, then, beyond all this beauty, this appeal to the senses is the strange, untold meaning of it all—the mystery beneath its simplicity that Lanier longs to pierce. In *The Marshes of Glynn,* he exclaims,

"Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing withholding and free—
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant planes, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain,
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain."

Here, indeed, is the same realization of Nature's fundamental character, that, uncoupled with eccentricity, might have made Walt Whitman a world-poet. In fact, as time passes, critics will more and more acknowledge that some of this work, especially *The Hymns of the Marshes,* stands among the greatest literary productions of modern times. By means of his powerful imagination, he symbolizes or, rather, personifies the mightier phases of Nature, and the river and the marsh become living, moving, thinking creatures. The *Marshes of Glynn* again

serve as an admirable example; for he gives to this vast wilderness a calm, almost intellectual dignity; and, yet, beneath this we seem to see in the watery waste a great, creeping, serpent-like being, conscious of its awful strength. Here, as Hamilton Wright Mabie has said, is "the large elemental movement of imagination, . . . a movement which has a touch of tidal depth and reach in it, a hint of cosmical power and meaning."

But, relieving his words from any trace of terror, comes the tenderness of his love for Nature's things. What a happy expression is *A Ballad of Trees and the Master:*

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him;
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him,
When into the woods He came.

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods He came."

And again, what a confidence in Nature is shown in these words to the sun, in *Sunrise!*

"Oh, never the mast-high run of the seas
Of traffic shall hide thee,
Never the hell-colored smoke of the factories
Hide thee,
Never the reek of the time's fen-politics
Hide thee,
And ever my heart through the night shall with knowledge
abide thee,
And ever by day shall my spirit, as one that hath tried thee,
Labor, at leisure, in art,—till yonder beside thee
My soul shall float, friend Sun,
The day being done."

Well has Thomas Wentworth Higginson declared that "in his description of sunrise . . . he puts . . . such a wealth of outdoor observation as makes even Thoreau seem thin and arid."

Artist as he is, Lanier is not a whole-souled believer in art for art's sake. Moral purpose is present from first to last. By no means a follower of the fleshly school of poets, he never makes realism a pretext for debauchery, and "the beauty of holiness"—a favorite expression of his—is beauty of a very real sort in his verse. One of his lectures delivered at Johns Hopkins contains this thought: "In a word, unless you are suffused with truth, wisdom, goodness, and love, abandon the hope that the ages will accept you as an artist." We have seen his conception of the poets' duty, as shown in *Corn;* again, in *The Bee,* he exclaims,

> "Wilt ask, what profit e'er a poet brings?
> He beareth starry stuff about his wings
> To pollen thee and sting thee fertile."

"Impressed but not overwhelmed by the sad and tragic conditions of his life," he saw in Nature serious applications for his own existence and for the existence of his fellow-men. Note the closing lines of *Song of the Chattahoochee:*

> "But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
> And oh, not the valleys of Hall,
> Shall hinder the rain from attaining the plain,
> For downward the voices of duty call—
> Downward to toil and be mixed with the main.
> The dry fields burn and the mills are to turn,
> And a thousand meadows mortally yearn,
> And the final main from beyond the plain
> Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
> And calls through the valleys of Hall."

In *The Symphony,* too, is the same strongly marked moral purpose. We are overcome by our greed, he declares:

"We weave in the mills and weave in the kilns,
We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,
And thieve much gold from the Devil's bank tills,
To relieve, O God, what manner of ills?"

And, again, in the same poem:

"But who said once in the lordly tone,
Man shall not live by bread alone,
But all that cometh from the throne?
Hath God said so?
But Trade saith *No.*"

It is his sincere belief that

"The time needs heart—'tis tired of head."

What philosophy Lanier might have expressed we can only conjecture. He had not reached his highest possibilities when death came. But what he has left is noble even if somewhat fragmentary. The amount of his poetry is not great; but there remains, to use the words of Mme. Blanc, "a diamond shower of beautiful verses, of images grandiose and gracious, of happy expressions which compose the most exquisite of anthologies."

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW SOUTH

(1875-1905)

It was in December, 1886, that Henry Grady said in his address before the New England Club: "The old South rested everything on slavery and agriculture, unconscious that these could neither give nor maintain healthy growth. The new South presents a perfect democracy, the oligarchs leading in the popular movement—a social system compact and closely knitted, less splendid on the surface, but stronger at the core—a hundred farms for every plantation, fifty houses for every palace—and a diversified industry that meets the complex needs of this complex age.

"The new South is enamored of her new work. Her soul is stirred with the breath of a new life. The light of a grander day is falling fair on her face. She is thrilling with the consciousness of growing power and prosperity. As she stands upright, full-statured and equal among the people of the earth, breathing the keen air and looking out upon the expanded horizon, she understands that her emancipation came because through the inscrutable wisdom of God, her honest purpose was crossed, and her brave armies were beaten."

In the opening years of the twentieth century these words are even nearer exact truth than in the days when the famous orator said them. The talk of an "oppressed South" has now become an unavailing

weapon, even in the hands of the unscrupulous politician, and in its place has come a realization of the wonderful resources, advantages, and undoubted future greatness of the section. True, there are vast areas still silent in their primeval wildness. Equally true is the fact that slovenly methods of cultivation have turned portions into worse than wilderness. There has been too little variety, too great a reliance upon the one product, cotton. In consequence, the whole section has had brief periods of prosperity and long ones of depressing poverty. But with the younger generation of the nineteenth century there came a desire for broader activities; enormous mineral deposits have been opened; factories have sprung up; and old and sleepy ante-bellum towns have become flourishing manufacturing centers. The days of the "Reconstruction" having been passed, and the "carpet-bagger" having reaped his harvest and departed, the South has awakened to a sense of its possibilities.

With this younger generation came a genuine revival in literary work. True, no great magazines nor publishing houses came into existence; but a literature more purely Southern perhaps than much written before the war now appeared. For now, not only did an astonishingly large number of writers begin their work, but, also, what was of greater significance, there appeared a local flavor,—a tone so positive, so persistent, and, above all, so entirely new that American Literature of the last quarter of the nineteenth century was immeasurably affected by it. Says Judge A. W. Tourgée, writing in *The Forum* of 1888: "A foreigner studying our current literature, without knowledge of our history, and judging our civilization by our fiction, would undoubtedly conclude that the South was the seat of intellectual empire in America." A glance at the magazines of

the day or at the recent book-lists of American publishing-houses will substantiate such a statement.

The main literary trouble with the South of today lies in the fact that it has no one great literary and publishing center. The East has long had such a point in New York; the central West is fast gaining one in Chicago; while in the extreme West San Francisco bids fair to become such a center. But in the South such a place does not as yet exist. Before the war Charleston and Richmond were meccas for literary aspirants; but after the civil strife their prestige was gone, and since then the literary genius of the Southern States has, for the most part, sought New York as the market-place for its wares. Some have argued that judging by other countries, America will have but one great center of letters; that England has but one, London; that Germany finds Leipzig sufficient; that France looks to Paris for her books. But it should be remembered that almost any of the European countries could be enclosed within the boundaries of *one* of the Southern States. America, in its vastness, may well expect more than one great literary metropolis. But such a market is not absolutely necessary for the growth of a Southern Literature. It would, indeed, be helpful; but that a writing intrinsically Southern is flourishing without it is self-evident.

I

Now, with this general change from agriculture to manufacturing and commercialism, there came in the South, as in all other parts of the country, a dropping away from the old ideals of "professions." Especially is this true of law, or, rather, its ever present companion in the Southern States—politics. The days of the orator-statesman seem to have

passed forever, and today this section has no men of the Calhoun or Clay type. Here and there is yet a figure important because of power in state-craft; but even these men are not found delivering eloquent orations in legislative halls. Rather through the silent but not less powerful voice of the newspaper, they still influence the people.

Among such leaders the names of two come most quickly to mind: HENRY WATTERSON (1840-) and HENRY WOODFIN GRADY (1851-1889). The former was born at Washington, D. C., and while still a boy became a reporter in that city. He served in the Confederate army throughout the Civil War, and shortly after its close became editor of the Louisville, Kentucky, *Courier*. George D. Prentice, his predecessor, had lifted this paper to an exceedingly high plane, and when, in 1868, it became the *Courier-Journal*, with Watterson as editor, it was soon looked upon as the most important daily in the South. With the exception of a year (1876-1877) spent in Congress, he has made the editing of this paper the chief work of his life. The result has been that his editorial page is a force in moulding public opinion, while its fairness of tone, its general high moral level, and its refusal to participate in demagogy of any brand have gained for it the respect of men of all parties.

Henry Watterson — (1840-)

Watterson is well fitted for his position as a public man. With a thorough, personal knowledge of party history during the latter half of the nineteenth century, with a "sticking" manner of saying things, in charge of a paper established on a firm basis by such a writer as George D. Prentice, and possessing no mean gifts as an orator, he has been endowed in such a way as to place him at all times prominently before the American public. Perhaps it is because the man

retains so little of sectional bitterness that he has received the attention of both South and North. His words in a speech before the National Bankers' Convention (Louisville, 1883) are indicative of this trait:

"The South! It is no problem at all. I thank God that at last we can say with truth, it is simply a geographic expression. The whole story of the South may be summed up in a sentence: She was rich, and she lost her riches; she was poor and in bondage; she was set free, and she had to go to work; she went to work, and she is richer than ever before. You see it was a ground-hog case. The soil was here, the climate was here, but along with these was a curse, the curse of slavery. God passed the rod across the land and smote the people. Then, in His goodness and mercy, He waved the wand of enchantment, and lo, like a flower, His blessing burst forth. Indeed, may the South say, as in the experience of men it is rare for any to say with perfect sincerity:

'Sweet are the uses of adversity.'"

II

Henry Grady — (1851-1889)

Doubtless the most eloquent Southerner of the last quarter of the nineteenth century was Henry Grady (1851-1889). The true greatness of this remarkable man is just beginning to be appreciated. He was born at Athens, Georgia, where he spent most of his boyhood and received his early education. Not noted at all for over-zealous attention to his schoolwork, he nevertheless was an extensive reader and, even at this early age, a natural leader of his companions. His father was killed in the Civil War;

but his mother, by dint of much economy, managed to aid him in attending the University of Georgia, where he graduated in 1868. Here, again, he was not an intense student in the required studies, and yet his wide reading, especially in history and fiction, and his powers as an orator ranked him as a young man of great promise.

After a course at the University of Virginia, he took up newspaper work in Georgia and in the course of time became editor of the Rome *Courier*. It was just at this time that the strong manhood of Grady asserted itself. One of his editorials against a city "ring" having been denied publication by the proprietor of the paper, he promptly resigned, bought the two remaining journals of the town, and next morning published the rousing editorial in his own sheet. Through erratic management his paper failed, and Grady went to Atlanta and became one of the founders of the *Atlanta Herald*. In his attempts to make this the leading paper of the South, he spared no expense, even chartering a special engine to carry one thousand papers one hundred miles. But in time a mortgage on the property was foreclosed, and Grady found himself penniless.

He borrowed fifty dollars, gave twenty dollars to his wife, and hastened to New York to try his fortune. Having applied at the *Herald* office, he was asked by the managing editor if he knew anything about politics. "I replied," writes Grady, "that I knew very little about anything else." He then wrote a splendid article on Southern constitutional conventions and at once became a member of the *Herald* staff. In 1880 he became managing editor of *The Atlanta Constitution,* and from that day he was a positive leader in the South. "He was almost an absolute dictator in Georgia politics. No man cared to stand for election to any place, high

or low, unless he felt Grady was with him." And yet he never sought office for himself, and he refused many offers. He first attracted attention throughout the whole nation by his address, *The New South,* delivered at the banquet of the New England Society in December, 1886. This was followed by other masterly efforts, especially the widely read address before the Boston Merchants Association in December, 1889; and he became known as one of the greatest of American orators. It was at this time that death came upon him. Brought home from Boston, with a severe attack of pneumonia, he lingered but a few days, and died on December 23, 1889.

The memory of an orator, actor, or editor lives largely through tradition. The effective words of Grady's editorial page served their purpose and passed into forgetfulness; but the results will not die. The city of Atlanta will long remember his unremitting efforts for the fairs of 1880, 1886, and 1888. The Y. M. C. A. building, the Confederate Soldiers' Home, and various educational and industrial institutions of the city are conspicuous monuments to his energy. His work for the rural South was indeed fruitful. His vision of the possibilities of the section was beneficial both industrially and spiritually. But, after all, it is as an interpreter between the North and the South that he is deserving of greatest gratitude.

He was well fitted for such a task. He seemed absolutely without prejudice. Of the race question he said in an address at Dallas, Texas, in 1887:

"What of the negro? This of him. I want no better friend than the black boy who was raised by my side, and who is now trudging patiently with down-cast eyes and shambling figure through his lowly way in life. I want no sweeter music than the 'crooning' of my old 'mammy' now dead and gone

to rest, as I heard it when she held me in her loving arms, and, bending her old black face above me, stole the cares from my brain and led me smiling into sleep. . . .

"History has no parallel to the faith kept by the negro in the South during the war. Often five hundred negroes to a single white man, and yet through these dusky throngs the women and children walked in safety, and the unprotected homes rested in peace. . . . Everywhere humble and kindly; the body-guard of the helpless; the rough companion of the little ones; the observant friend; the silent sentry in his lowly cabin; the shrewd counselor. . . . A thousand torches would have disbanded every Southern army, but not one was lighted."

But Grady was stoutly for his section; and in his addresses both North and South he stated what he saw to be the truth, fearless of all criticism. His picture of the Confederate soldier returning home shows how deeply he felt for his home-land:

"Let me picture to you the foot-sore Confederate soldier, as buttoning up in his faded gray jacket the parole which was to bear testimony to his children of his fidelity and faith, he turned his face southward from Appomattox in April, 1865. Think of him as ragged, half-starved, heavy-hearted, enfeebled by want and wounds, having fought to exhaustion, he surrenders his gun, wrings the hands of his comrades in silence, and, lifting his tear-stained and pallid face for the last time to the graves that dot old Virginia hills, pulls his gray cap over his brow, and begins the slow and painful journey.

"What does he find—let me ask you who went to your homes eager to find in the welcome you had justly earned, full payment for four years' sacrifice—what does he find when, having followed the battle-stained cross against overwhelming odds, dreading

death not half so much as surrender, he reaches the home he left so prosperous and beautiful? He finds his house in ruins, his farm devastated, his slaves free, his stock killed, his barns empty, his trade destroyed, his money worthless, his social system, feudal in its magnificence, swept away, his comrades slain, and the burdens of others heavy on his shoulders. Crushed by defeat, his very traditions are gone."

Seeing the strength and weakness of both sides of the great division, Grady sought with whole-hearted zeal to reunite the broken bonds. "He taught that to know and to be are greater things than to get and to have." He fulfills the highest ideal of a patriot; one who does more for his fellow-men than he does for himself.

POETRY

I

When we turn to the verse-writers of this period we find a legion of minor poets, but no great ones. The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a scientific awakening and not a poetical one. Men perhaps found less time for the enjoyment of metre and rhyme, and the poets, instead of singing about the greater subjects of the day drifted away into remote regions of thought and sentiment, and to many readers seemed without sympathy and entirely out of touch with the struggles about them. In the South, as elsewhere, we find dainty expressions of dainty sentiments; but the best intellect of the period has so far expressed itself in *fiction,* if in literature at all, or else in scientific and industrial activities.

Of these many verse-writers a rather small group have shown more than average talent. Among such persons may be mentioned John Henry Boner

(1845-1903), Irwin Russell (1853-1879), Samuel Minturn Peck (1854-), Frank L. Stanton (1857-), and Madison Cawein (1865-).

John Henry Boner — (1845-1903)

John Henry Boner is known best by his short poem, *Poe's Cottage at Fordham;* but a number of other productions by him are of equal or superior merit. Born at Salem, North Carolina, educated in private schools of that State, and having passed most of his early manhood in the South, he is distinctly Southern in his descriptions and general tone. As an instance, *The Light'ood Fire* may be taken:

"When wintry days are dark and drear
And all the forest ways grow still,
When gray snow-laden clouds appear
Along the bleak horizon hill,
When cattle all are snugly penned
And sheep go huddling close together,
When steady streams of smoke ascend
From farm-house chimneys—in such weather
Give me old Carolina's own,
A great log house, a great hearthstone,
A cheering pipe of cob or briar
And a red, heaping light'ood fire."

In 1887 Boner removed to New York, where he became one of the editors of *The Century Dictionary* and of *A Library of American Literature,* but the flavor of the South is still seen in his poems written after the change. His volume of verse, *Whispering Pines* (1883), containing the best of his work up to that time, shows no small power in suggestive descriptions, in beauty of sound, and in happiness of sentiment. None of his poems attacks the deeper questions of existence, nor are there any lofty flights of imagination. But in their neatness of expression they are excellent. He may, after all, be classed among the poets made famous by one work—*Poe's Cottage:*

"Here lived the soul enchanted
By melody of song;
Here dwelt the spirit haunted
By a demoniac throng;
Here sang his lips elated;
Here grief and death were sated;
Here loved and here unmated
Was he, so frail, so strong."

II

Irwin Russell — (1853-1879)

In Irwin Russell (1853-1879) we find one of the first men to realize the literary value of the negro character and dialect. During the brief years of his life he produced some striking work of this nature; and, although the limitations of such a class of literature would necessarily prevent productions of great power, yet, had he lived, he might have become in American poetry what Joel Chandler Harris is fast becoming in folk-lore. He was born at Port Gibson, Mississippi. Early in his boyhood his family removed to St. Louis, and there he attended the public schools and St. Louis University. After his graduation in the four-years' commercial course in 1869, he began the study of law, and, although a minor, was admitted to the bar in 1873. But, caring little for legal affairs, he devoted more and more time to literature, and became well known locally through his contributions to newspapers.

It was in January, 1876, that his work first appeared in *Scribner's,* and henceforth all of his poetry with the exception of a few pieces in *Puck* and in *Appleton's Journal,* was written for that magazine. In December, 1878, he went to New York, hoping to meet with success along his chosen line; but he became dangerously ill and, after a few weeks, was compelled to return to the South. He

went to New Orleans. There, in extreme poverty and distress, he battled manfully for health and for a little longer time to write. The weakened frame could not long continue the struggle, and death came in December, 1879.

Irwin Russell seems to gain the very spirit of the old-time negro. The quaint humor, the shrewd philosophy, the child-like willingness to believe, the emotional, religious nature, and, above all, the delight in superstition and folk-lore—all these the young poet portrays without affectation. A few lines from *Christmas-Night in the Quarters* will show this talent:

"How many things they say and do
That never would occur to you,
See Brudder Brown—whose saving grace
Would sanctify a quarter-race—
Out on the crowded floor advance,
To 'beg a blessin' on dis dance.'

"'O Mahsr! let dis gath'rin' fin' a blessin' in yo' sight!
Don't judge us hard fur what we does—you know it's Christmas night;
An' all de balance ob de yeah we does as right's we kin.
Ef dancin's wrong, O Mahsr! let de time excuse de sin!

"'We labors in de vineya'd wukin' hard an' wukin' true;
Now shorely you won't notus, if we eats a grape or two,
And takes a leetle holiday,—a leetle restin' spell,—
Bekase, nex' week, we'll start in fresh an' labor twicet as well.'"

There are many opponents of dialect writing, and doubtless much that is in this form would be stronger and more effective in cultured English; "but," to use the words of Dr. C. A. Smith, "when a writer portrays and then perpetuates the peculiar life of a people numbering four million, he is to that extent an historian; and Irwin Russell's example in this respect meant a complete change of front in Southern Literature." This bold innovation on the part of the young poet did more than furnish amusement and novelty for the moment; it taught Southern writers

that their "acres of diamonds" were *at home.* That this is true may be seen in the appreciation of such writers as Joel Chandler Harris, who speaks highly of the poet's character studies, and Thomas Nelson Page, who says, "It was the light of his genius shining through his dialect poems—first of dialect poems and still first—that led my feet in the direction I have since tried to follow." In the twenty-six years of his life, he wrote with deeper power than he himself realized; for from his day dates a new phase of literature.

III

In Samuel Minturn Peck (1854-) we find a very graceful writer of *vers de societé* and, yet, at times a poet of some depth. Born near Tuscaloosa, Alabama, he was educated in the State University at that place, and, with the exception of a few years spent in study of medicine at New York, he has always lived in or near that city. He has been successful both in writing and in farming, and thus has had ample opportunity to test the kind of life for which many poets have longed. His volume of verse, *Cap and Bells* (1886), has had a wide reading, while today his contributions are welcomed by many magazines.

Samuel Minturn Peck — (1854-)

Perhaps his best known poems are *I Wonder What Maud Will Say* and *A Knot of Blue,* a little lyric that has been set to music by no less than twelve composers. But other poems of his equally as good might be given. Gracefulness is the notable trait in all this work; but with this there sometimes goes a very happy humor. For instance, when the female

doctor comes to town, he declares, in *Bessie Brown, M. D.*,

> "Like all the rest, I too grew ill;
> My aching heart there was no quelling,
> I tremble at my doctor's bill,—
> And lo! the items still are swelling.
> The drugs I've drunk you'd weep to hear!
> They've quite enriched the fair concocter,
> And I'm a ruined man, I fear,
> Unless—I wed the Doctor!"

Some would say, perhaps, that this lighter form of poetry soon perishes, that as soon as it has delighted the hour its work is done. This would seem to be true; yet Oliver Wendell Holmes' poetry is still popular and in England the fanciful rhymes of Austin Dodson are read and re-read with ever-increasing admiration. Samuel Minturn Peck has written some lines that many would not wish American Literature to lose.

IV

Frank Lebby Stanton — (1859-)

A study of American Literature would seem to show that a newspaper office is a splendid school for young writers. Many indeed are the novelists and poets who learned in such a place their earliest lessons in literature-making. In Frank Lebby Stanton we find a well-known example—a man who gained much of his education in front of a printing press and among wide-awake, practical men. He was born at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1859, early removed to Savannah, and before his ninth birthday was working as a farmhand. Later he learned the printer's trade, and, passing from one paper to another, at length secured a position on the Rome, Georgia, *Tribune*. From this place he went

to *The Atlanta Constitution,* to which he contributes a column daily.

Much of Stanton's work is good; much of it is poor. The very position that he holds compels such a result. Forced to contribute his daily amount of writing, and, at the same time, contributing to several other newspapers and magazines, he frequently "grinds out" rhymed lines and short sketches utterly unworthy of him. But that he can do good work is evidenced by his volume, *Songs of a Day,*— a book which has sold into several editions. In these verses, as in some that have appeared since, there is unaffected sentiment mingled with bits of shrewd wisdom, and all expressed in rather musical language. The chief strength of the man seems to lie in the fact that his songs, coming from his own heart, reach the hearts of his readers. And, therefore, although he may never write great works, he will at least bring poetry into the homes of the common people and thus prepare them for a conception of that higher form of verse which otherwise they might never appreciate.

V

Madison Cawein — (1865-)

Madison Cawein was born at Louisville, Kentucky, and, after receiving a public-school education in that city, became an accountant in a business house. But commercialism has by no means stunted the poetic soul of the man; for he has written a large amount of verse for a man of his age. Among his best known volumes are *Triumph of Music, Lyrics and Idylls,* and *Red Leaves and Roses,* but these are only a few from the many. We find in him a poet capable of much vivacity and fancy, and with it all

a very melodious manner of expression. A lover of Nature, he shows no mean power of description when speaking of these things that he admires and loves. For an instance of this, a stanza from *The Whippoorwill* may be given:

"Above long woodland ways that led
To dells the stealthy twilights tread
The west was hot geranium-red;
And still, and still,
Along old lanes, the locusts sow
With clustered curls the May-times know,
Out of the crimson afterglow,
We heard the homeward cattle low,
And then the far-off, far-off woe
Of 'whippoorwill!' of 'whippoorwill!'"

But more promising, perhaps, than this ability are the seriousness and depth of his works. His *Disenchantment of Death* would not be unworthy of poets of far greater fame. Here is something of Wordsworth's philosophy, but expressed in much more dramatic terms than the English poet used:

"Hush! She is dead! Tread gently as the light
Foots dim the weary room. Thou shalt behold.
Look!—In death's ermine pomp of awful white,
Pale passion of pulseless slumber virgin cold!
Bold, beautiful youth proud as heroic Might—
Death! and how death hath made it vastly old.

"Old earth she is now: energy of birth
Glad wings hath fledged and tried them suddenly;
The eyes that held have freed their narrow mirth;
Their sparks of spirit, which made this to be,
Shine fixed in rarer jewels not of earth,
For Fairylands beyond some silent sea."

In Cawein, as in the others just now discussed, we see the possibilities of great poetry. Imagination, thought, understanding of certain phases of life, and technical ability are here; but the spirit of the times somewhat hampers lofty poetic flights. Lengthy poems are not encouraged by the periodicals. The

stanzas, exceedingly few in number, must give but some minutest aspect of a great emotion or thought. This no doubt leads to conciseness, and some rare gems have resulted; the broadness of poetry, however, is threatened.

How many writers of excellent verse we have left unnoticed, each reader must judge for himself. A long list of such minor poets comes to mind—John Banister Tabb (1845-), a writer of beautiful lyrics; George Herbert Sass (1845-), whose *In A King-Cambyses Vein* has been greatly admired; Robert Burns Wilson (1850-), author of *Life and Love;* William Hayne (1856-), son of Paul Hamilton Hayne, and author of *Sylvan Lyrics;* Lizette Woodworth Reese (186 -), author of *A Branch of May;* Danske Dandridge (1859-), author of *Joy and Other Poems;* Benjamin Sledd (1864-), author of *The Watchers of the Hearth;* Robert Loveman (1864-), author of *Songs from a Georgia Garden* and several other volumes. These names, and many others, give most pleasing evidence against the pessimistic view that the interest in poetry is practically gone. The South, with its luxuriant Nature, its romantic traditions, its heroic yet sorrowful history, its recent discovery of its own vast latent powers, should indeed do much in the poetical revival that the fulness of time will surely give to America.

FICTION

Let us close this survey of Southern Literature with a study of the fiction writers who have developed under the new social conditions. Their number is legion,—so great indeed that many critics have

noted the fact that the South and the Central West are furnishing by far the greater part of the day's reading. It is but natural that this should be the case. The South has a population almost wholly American. With the exception of the French in Louisiana, the people are of the same English and Scotch-Irish character as the early Virginia settlers. Therefore they have a certain well-defined manner of thinking and of feeling that has not been weakened by either the effeteness of Southern Europeans, the nihilistic tendencies of Slavonic immigrants, or the mercenary grasp of Northern Europeans. The people of this section may be narrow in some respects; but their very narrowness gives them strength and originality.

The tone of Southern fiction at the opening of the new century is fresh. There are no signs of over-refinement, of poverty of emotions, or weariness of life. A field bountiful in possibilities is being worked, and the results are not failing of recognition. That unique character, the American negro, so undeveloped in intellect, yet so rich in emotions; the ante-bellum gentleman, with his now antiquated conceptions of things in general; the sudden industrial changes; the wonderful scenery; the strange mingling of the new and the old; and, above all, the deeply pathetic history of the section—these and many other themes, are at last gaining recognition as literary material of most unusual richness.

I

Francis Hopkinson Smith — (1838-)

One of the earliest of these writers belonging more especially to the New South is Francis Hopkinson Smith (1838-). Born at Baltimore, he was early left in that city to work out his destiny by "the sweat of his brow." His opportunities for education were exceedingly meagre, but during the toilsome years of his youth, while working in various Southern cities, he spent his evenings in gaining knowledge. He very early felt the artistic promptings within himself, and, as time passed, he took up the study of drawing and painting. Then followed a course in civil engineering, and then another pursuit and another, until today he is noted nearly as much by his work as an engineer, a light-house builder, a painter, and a lecturer as by his writings. In fact, literature-making seems to be almost a pastime with him, and the wonder of it is that among his manifold activities he finds any time whatever for such a pursuit.

In the course of his mechanical and artistic work he has traveled widely, with the result that some of his best known writings are descriptive of other lands. Such, for instance, are *Well-Worn Roads of Spain, Holland and Italy,* and *A White Umbrella in Mexico*—books that charm not only by their power of description but by their curious anecdotes, their delicate humor, and the strange and oftentimes ridiculous situations in which their characters are placed. Few indeed are the American writers superior to him in combined lightness and sureness of touch and in the deftness with which scenes are placed vividly before the reader.

But, undoubtedly, Smith will be remembered longest by his story of Southern life, *Colonel Carter of*

Cartersville. A Book of the Tile Club, A Gentleman Vagabond, and *Tom Grogan* are filled with a delightful humor and no small insight into things of this existence; but neither these nor the later volume, *Colonel Carter's Christmas,* have quite the same charm as *Colonel Carter of Cartersville.* Here are displayed with most sympathetic touches the lovableness and the easily forgiven weaknesses of the ante-bellum gentleman of the South. This book, like many of Smith's short stories, has a distinctly Southern flavor. He is skillful in his use of negro dialect, and, having seen the negro in many sections and under many different conditions, he uses the character to great advantage. A mixture of quaint humor and tender sentiment are ever present, and, with it all, a certain warmth and an impression that the writer, too, is thoroughly enjoying the tale. Nor is there ever absent the artist's quick eye for situations, scenes, and colors. Seldom dealing with the harsher and sadder phases of life, he prefers, rather, the quaint and eccentric, those things that by the very lovableness of their weaknesses charm us all. Few, indeed, are the American writers who have dealt with life from so many standpoints, both practical and artistic, as has this versatile man.

II

George Washington Cable — (1844-)

This Dame Popularity—what a deceitful mistress she is! With what surprising suddenness she comes, and with what shocking precipitation she vanishes! A well known instance—in certain parts of the South, at least—is George Washington Cable (1844-). For some years now his name has scarcely been spoken in the far South, without words of condemnation; and, although in these first years of

the new century the bitterness is abating, there is still enough of it to make Mr. Cable feel a little ill-at-ease in his own land. For in spite of the fact that this author deals rather unmercifully with the now out-worn slavery question and the now fast-growing negro question, he is a native Southerner "for several generations back."

He was born at New Orleans, of rather wealthy and influential parents; but early in the boy's childhood his father failed in business, and ten years later (1859) died, leaving the family with extremely limited means. George, then fourteen, was compelled to leave school and take a clerkship in a mercantile house. Then came the Civil War, and Cable, too young to enter during the first years, enlisted in a Mississippi regiment in 1863. After the return of peace he studied civil engineering and for some time had been engaged in surveying when an attack of malarial fever fortunately stopped all labor. "Fortunately" one may say, because he thus took time to study the life about him and to see its literary possibilities.

He began to contribute to the New Orleans *Picayune* and, for a time, was connected editorially with the paper; but, as he himself declares he was not a success as a reporter. The next position was that of an accountant in a cotton establishment. And here it was that the determination of the man began to show itself. After the day's work he wrote until far into the night, and at length adopted the custom of rising every morning at four o'clock and writing until breakfast. Fortunately, we may say again, he lost his position in 1879, and he determined to strive for a living as a writer and as that alone. That he has been successful is evidenced by the long list of such popular books as *Old Creole Days* (1879), *The Grandissimes* (1880), *Madame Delphine* (1881),

Dr. Sevier (1883), *The Silent South* (1885), and *Bonaventure* (1888). In 1885 he removed to the North and in recent years he has devoted much time to philanthropic movements; such as the betterment of prison-labor and the uplifting of the negro.

It was in 1890 that Cable wrote *The Negro Question*—the chief cause of his unpopularity among certain Southerners. His descriptions of the Creoles had been received with but mild remonstrances; his merciless scourging of the institution of slavery had been read with surprising calmness; but when he rebelled against what he considered unjust treatment of the black man of today, a wave of bitter indignation swept over the extreme Southern States. This is by no means to the credit of the South. His arguments should have been met with arguments, not with vituperation and violent threats. But it is as a writer of lasting literature, and not as a political essayist, that Cable will receive notice here. In his Creole stories he has touched a distinctly American vein. Yes, more, "his fictions are saturated with the South and reflect its life with photographic accuracy." There has been some attacking of his characterization of these strange people; but it must be remembered that he does not pretend to give every phase of Creole life or to exhaust the subject. And in spite of the "mistaken" ideas which his enemies would attribute to him, he portrays a unique civilization, with such skill, with such finish, and, above all, with such kindly charitableness that our hearts warm toward him.

Cable's artistic ability cannot be doubted. His style, pure, simple, and rather unadorned, almost poetic at times and yet strong and throbbing with life, is something ideal for these days of hasty and careless fiction-writing. There is in all his work an immediate mingling of humor and pathos—a natural and effective succession of laughter and tears. His

use of the French dialect, with its quaint, poetic, and yet often striking way of putting things, help no little in bringing about such a result.

But above all beauty, quaintness, or power of his expression stands the sincere ethical tone of his work. Of "preaching" there is none; but nevertheless, the moral purpose is impressed upon the reader. Among his humble peasants, his ancient families, his curious mingling of other-day grandeur and modern day realities, we find heroes struggling on toward their ideals, and manhood lifting itself above depravity, sorrow, and deadening influences. The school-teacher in *Bonaventure* will stand in time to come as a noble type of the cross-bearer—one who passed out of the valley of Sorrow up to the hills of Self-Mastery. So, too, with the giant East Floridian, "Possun Jones," the simple Christian who changed the heart of the sin-hardened gambler. He and many other characters of this author's creation are of more power perhaps than we, contemporaries of Cable, are as yet willing to admit.

Be all this as it may, the fact remains that, in writing these stories, their author opened an absolutely new field in the world's literature. The novelty alone would have given him some notoriety. But only the hand of a real artist could have compelled an abiding interest in these remote and up to his time little-heard-of people. To him belongs largely the honor of having preserved the history, traditions, and customs of a fast-vanishing form of civilization.

III

Joel Chandler Harris — (1848-)

Who has not heard of Uncle Remus and of that master of strategy, Brer Rabbit? The man who introduced them to the world, Joel Chandler Harris (1848-), is quoted as having said that his work along this line is "stuff prepared during leisure moments of an active journalistic career, and lacks all that goes to make up a permanent literature." If Mr. Harris ever said that, he is mistaken. Long after the very names of his other sketches and of his novels are forgotten, these tales will linger on and on. For folk-lore has ever been the most permanent part of the world's literature.

The author's life has been a rather quiet and industrious one and in most particulars might be duplicated in the existence of a thousand and one newspaper men. Born near Eatonton, Georgia, he attended the schools of that rural district and at the age of fourteen was apprenticed to the publisher of a Georgia weekly, *The Countryman.* In this office he learned the trade of a printer, and for this paper wrote his first sketches. After the war he went to New Orleans as private secretary to a Southern editor and later became an editor himself, the paper being *The Advertiser* of Forsyth, Georgia. This was followed by five years' experience (1871-1876) on the Savannah *Daily News,* from which paper he went to *The Atlanta Constitution.* There he has remained ever since. It is through this daily that he has gained fame; for in it has appeared the greater part of his unique contribution to folk-lore,—one of the most original contributions, be it remembered, ever made to any literature.

It was in 1880 that *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* appeared; and this success has been followed by numerous others—*Mingo, and Other Sketches* (1883), *Nights with Uncle Remus* (1884), *Free Joe, and Other Georgia Sketches* (1888). *Mingo and Other Sketches* introduces the countrymen and mountaineers of Georgia, while *Free Joe, and Other Georgia Sketches* shows the mingled pathos and humor of the negro life. But these while very readable, are not comparable with the Uncle Remus sketches. For this quaint character is more than a mere teller of fables. He is a true type of the aged negro slave and in his mystery-loving way, he shows the inner life of the old South, its pride, its folly, its social distinctions, its mingling of strength and weakness.

The songs of the negro have often been commented upon. Harris catches at times the very spirit and movement of these chants. The black man is your true believer in a final judgment and in a stern, watchful God. He prefers the Old Testament to the New, and in his hymns he seems to catch the warning spirit of the prophets and psalmists.

"W'en de nashuns er de earf is standin' all aroun',
Who's a gwine ter be chosen fer to w'ar de glory-crown?
Who's a gwine fer ter stan' stiff-kneed en bol',
En answer to der name at de callin' er de roll?
You better come now, if you comin'—
Old Satan is loose an a bummin'—
De wheels er distruckshun is a hummin',
Oh, come 'long sinner, if you comin'."

In *Free Joe* we find the same sympathetic understanding of the negro nature. In fact this one story is worthy of attention as a noble tribute to the faithfulness of the slave and as a bitter rebuke to the merciless slave-owner.

But it is when Harris is a narrator of the ancient fables that he shows greatest power. Note the charm and force of the very surroundings or settings of

these stories—the aged negro bending beside the fire on the great wide hearth; the little boy silenced by the mystery of it all; the flexible and melodious voice of the story-teller; the ancient story of animal cunning, old as Æsop and far older; the abruptness of the ending; the sudden returning from the world of imagination to the earth of today;—all these things are dramatic helps which the greatest artist might not despise. Then notice, too, the expression, —so explicit, so rugged, so absolutely clear. The quality of the stories themselves needs no defence; they have stood the test of ages. But only a master of narration could have retained in the printed page their quaint simplicity, their tone of mystery, and their subtle charm. To Harris belongs a debt of gratitude for saving these stories from the hands of scientific investigators; for your philological student is the effective slayer of folk-lore.

No, these stories of wood-land struggles for existence cannot soon die. They are the folk-lore of the most curious people now living—a people who, in the sudden transformation of their millions from slavery to freedom, have retained that wonder in the things of Nature and that vigor of imagination which have been at all times characteristic of primitive races.

IV

Mary Noailles Murfree — (1850-)

Another author who deals with a primitive people is Mary Noailles Murfree (1850-), better known as Charles Egbert Craddock. She was born in the ancient family-home near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and in this region spent most of her girlhood. While she was a very small child she was made lame by a stroke of paralysis; but, from a literary standpoint, this was really a fortunate

event; for, being unable to play with other children, she turned to books for companionship, and this led on to writing. During the war the family had to desert the homestead, and for some time they lived in the little mountain village of Beersheba. There it was that she first studied the curious type of humanity, the Tennessee mountaineer, a people so ignorant, so superstitious, so far behind the world of today as to excite wonder and even pity in all who see them.

Some years after the war Miss Murfree removed to St. Louis, and soon after this change her first book appeared—*In the Tennessee Mountains* (1884). It seems that her first story, one of the eight in this book, was *The Dancin' Party at Harrison's Cove,* which appeared in the May *Atlantic,* 1878; and this success had been followed by another and another until her pen-name, "Charles Egbert Craddock" had become well known before the appearance of her first volume. But even the editors of the *Atlantic* knew very little about the "man" except that "his" real name was M. N. Murfree, that "he" was a Southerner, that "his" handwriting was very heavy, and that "he" wrote stories which made the hearts of the editors rejoice. When, one spring morning in 1885, a quiet little woman walked into the office and introduced herself as Charles Egbert Craddock, the editorial staff must have felt as Holmes did when he exclaimed, "What do you think? Charles Egbert Craddock is below, and *he's a woman!*" After *In the Tennessee Mountains* came *Where the Battle was Fought* (1884), a work neither so natural nor so effective as its predecessor. But all its successors, *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains* (1885), *In the Clouds* (1886), *The Story of Keedon Bluffs* (1887),

Stranger People's Country (1891), and others have a novelty, strength, and general charm that show a constantly improving hand.

Novelty is no test of the permanency of a literary work. Therefore, it is not this quality that has made these books entertaining year after year. It is her skillful art, revealing a curious people to our sympathetic understanding, the vigor and wholesomeness of her stories so full of life and the enjoyment of it, the strength of homely characters, moved by the same passions as people of higher degree, the environment of mountains, forests, streams and eternal solitude, painted so vividly,—it is these traits that give her work its value. Her plots are not the best features of her writing, although they are sufficient. There is absolutely no "padding." Even the short stories in her first volume are crowded with logically arranged events, and each one might easily be extended to the length of a novel. Again, the dialogue is good, but not surprisingly great. The characters in these tales do not permit such a degree of excellence. These men and women are not ready, keen, or witty talkers; but in their rugged way they are none the less strong and moving. The dialect is not exaggerated; for, not only in this but also in portrayal of character, in descriptions of scenes, and in every detail, she has conscientiously sought and has obtained almost absolute accuracy.

And what characters she draws! There, far secluded among the mountains, we find a strange people, "seeing dimly as through a glass," captives to ignorance and superstition, yet groping on toward their own rude ideals. The universal heart varies so little in any locality! Men and women rejoice, suffer, and desire very much the same in all ages and in all conditions of life; and Mary Noailles Murfree has simply retold the old story under new conditions.

But is not that something wonderful in itself—to see the ancient lesson in the rugged character of a strange, unknown folk?

Beyond even the figures of her stories are the beautiful descriptions of mountain scenes. Among these giant hills and deep, dark coves, she discovers an awe-inspiring spirit, and, what is far more difficult than the discovery, she communicates this spirit to her readers. These rugged landscapes do indeed possess a grandeur, a greatness so overwhelming as to make inadequate the simple word "beautiful." Yet, with genuine power she has succeeded in imprisoning the larger idea, or emotion, of it all. Let those who have seen these vast scenes answer for the truthfulness of such a description as this:

"He turned and looked at the gorge, as if he expected to see there the pearly disk among the dark obscurements of the night-shadowed mountains. It was instead a vista of many gleaming lights; the sunshine on the river, and the differing lustre of the water in the shadow; the fine crystalline green of the cataract, and the dazzling white of the foam and the spray, the luminous azure of the far-away peaks, and the enamelled glister of the blue sky,—all showing between the gloomy, sombre ranges close at hand."

George W. Cable has told the story of a fast-vanishing people; Joel Chandler Harris is telling the story of a fast-changing people; but Mary Noailles Murfree is telling the story of a people who, in these opening years of the twentieth century, wander on through their limited range of life much as their ancestors for generations have wandered. They, too, will some time vanish—the sooner the better; but this woman has told in what we hope to be imperishable form, the epic of their life.

V

We seldom realize the greatness of a man until it is almost too late to find his grave. It would seem that we are under bondage to the Past. Shakespeare has so be-Shakespeared the world that other mortals seem dwarfed out of their true significance. Too often critics surround their assertions about living men with such modifying and restraining clauses as to render the criticism almost void and without meaning. In the brief study of the writer now to be taken up, let us see if there is not something of unusual genius in his creations,—a fulness in his conceptions of life, a remarkable purity in his sentiment, and a style rarely surpassed in American Literature. If these things be true, why wait until another century to discover in him a truly great man of letters?

James Lane Allen — (1850-)

James Lane Allen (1850-) was born at Lexington, Kentucky, was educated at Transylvania University in that State, afterwards taught in that institution, and for some time was professor of Latin in Bethany College, Kentucky. Feeling that his call to be a writer was far stronger than the doubtful charms of a college professorship, he went to New York and ventured his all on his ability to write. Such works as *Flute and Violin, Summer in Arcady, A Kentucky Cardinal, Aftermath,* and *The Choir Invisible* are sufficient proof of his success.

It is at times somewhat difficult to place one's finger on just the characteristic that creates the charm of a literary work. James Lane Allen's art is of this evasive kind. Whether it be his plot, his characters, his sentiment, his view of life, or his manner of expression we cannot decide; perhaps

when all is said and done, it is their subtle fitness for one another that fills us with pleasure and admiration. For the "eternal fitness of things" is a test of masterful literature as well as of many other activities of life.

The plots of these stories are decidedly simple, uneventful, and therefore not exciting. Here, indeed, we find no concessions to the lover of "thrills"; no midnight fights, no swaggering, no blood-thirsty heroes; and yet we read with absorbing interest these minor but significant thoughts and emotions of daily life. The little deeds of life show character; and they are the actions recorded by Allen. In fact plot is almost entirely forgotten in many pages of his novels, and at no time does it consist of more than mere hooks upon which to hang his admirably expressed sentiments, emotions, and philosophy. So quiet, so peaceful, yet so full of the depths of human experience—these are the words that one deems applicable to such stories. The characters, in their naturalness, are no less admirable than the plots in their simplicity and general fitness. Allen makes no special claims for them; they are just such ordinary men and women as we see passing before us every day; and, yet, how near and dear these persons become before we close the book. From these simple descriptions of the romances of the middle-class life, we turn to look upon our fellowman with a new conception of his joys and his sorrows, his worth and his destiny. Such characters as Adam Moss, on the one hand, and King Solomon, on the other, are not soon forgotten. Every one has seen approaches to their prototypes in field and city, and, yet, how few have been the world's writers to realize the deeper, hidden traits of such beings. By word, by deed, or, perhaps more often, by mere suggestion, the author portrays in the most natural,

unobtrusive manner imaginable their struggles, their defects, their victories, and their fitness as types of suffering humanity.

It has been mentioned that perhaps much of this is done by the power of suggestion. This, it would seem, is the predominate trait of Allen's style—its suggestiveness. With a manner of expression so clear, so limpid, so musical as to be almost a rival of poetry in beauty, his lightness, sureness, and deftness of touch make a more powerful appeal to the imagination than great stores of details could possibly effect. Notice the skill in this description of the wife's death, in *Aftermath:*

"By and by I went out to the strawberry bed. The season was too backward. None were turning. . . . At last I gathered a few perfect leaves and blossoms, and presented them to her in silence on a plate with a waiter and napkin.

"She rewarded me with a laugh, and lifted from the plate a spray of blossoms.

" 'They will be ripe by the time I am well,' she said, the sunlight of memory coming out upon her face. Then, having touched the wet blossoms with her finger-tips, she dropped them quickly back into the plate.

" 'How cold they are!' she said, as a shiver ran through her. At the same time she looked quickly, her eyes grown dark with dread.

"I set the plate hastily down, and she put her hands in mine to warm them."

So the chapter ends. Turning to the next, we find these words:

"A month has gone by since Georgiana passed away."

How suggestive of the terrors of death—terrors very real to most mortals! Far more effective than elaborate descriptions are such hints; but seldom has there been a man in American Literature artist

enough to recognize their power and use them. The future may place James Lane Allen beside Hawthorne as one of the masters of subtle, suggestive prose.

But the purity of his sentiment is more enviable than his style. Here we see a noble love for Nature, —a genuine love, not a sentimental fad of the day. Born and reared in the blue-grass country of Kentucky, Allen has pictured its quiet beauty with rare sympathy. The fellowship of Nature is here something real. But more lofty than this love of the visible forms is that which is partially a result of it—the general tone or effect of the completed story. The sentiment of the writer is so pure, so ideal, as to make every reader close the volume with a longing for a higher, nobler kind of life. Of quiet humor there is much of good quality; but in pathos Allen has given us specimens, such as the last chapters of *Aftermath,* so piercing, so suggestive of eternal yearning for that which might have been, that we are compelled to exclaim, "This is true, very true to life; but why, oh, why must life be thus?"

Allen may not be called a prolific writer. The quality of his work would not permit an astonishingly large amount. It is to his credit that, while many writers of these latter days have turned themselves into machines for grinding out innumerable volumes, he bides his time and writes that which will appeal not merely to the moment but to the far future. In him we have an artist, true to his calling, dealing in a quiet, powerful way with those emotions and puzzles of life which man may never quite comprehend, yet will never cease to investigate.

We have seen how valuable a literary aid the negro has been. Once more we find in him the source of an author's fame. Thomas Nelson Page (1853-) has written many thoughtful essays and well-worded descriptions, but by far his most popular work has been his negro dialect stories. Page was born at Oakland, Hanover county, Virginia, was a student at Washington and Lee College, graduated from the law department of the University of Virginia, and has practised his profession at Richmond. His first contribution to the popular magazines is said to have been *Unc' Gabe's White Folks*, which appeared in *Scribner's;* and from time to time this was followed by other poems in dialect. However, it was not until 1884 that he began to receive wide notice; for it was then that his first story of Virginia life, *Marse Chan*, appeared. This simple but dramatic tale was greatly praised, and under such encouragement, others of almost equal merit soon followed it.

Thomas Nelson Page — (1853-)

In 1887 Page collected these stories into a volume, *In Ole Virginia*, a book which gained wide popularity; as did, also, his next one, *Two Little Confederates* (1888). Through the works that have followed since—*On Newe Found River* (1891), *Eisket and Other Stories* (1891), *The Old South* (1892), *Social Life in Old Virginia* (1897), and others, he has gained not only greater fame but the affection of the Southern people; for in some of these volumes he has entered into an elaborate and effective defence of the ante-bellum system and institutions. This is particularly true of *The Old South* and *Social Life in Old Virginia*. Dealing here with the former days, he describes in very picturesque and often convincing language the old plantation form of government, when each farm was in itself a kingdom or common-

wealth, almost independent industrially, yet but one link in the great chain of social units. The pictures given here are much nearer truth than most of those shown by either the older or the younger generation of Southern writers; for they that lost wealth and social position in the great struggle have spoken with too much bitterness and with too evident a desire to find in the Old South an earthly paradise; while the younger writers, sprung up since the war, have, in many cases, so imbibed the later spirit of clash, bustle, and uproar that they cannot sympathetically portray the quieter but scarcely less industrious methods of yore. Happily, Thomas Nelson Page has reached neither extreme; and his work is therefore of intrinsic value.

Whatever may be the value of a thoughtful essay, a well-told story is always a much more enviable creation from an artistic standpoint. Posterity doubtless will judge Page not by his serious papers, but by his fiction. And, as we now see his work, he can stand the test. A great amount of romance is growing up around the rugged ruins of the Old South, to soften the rougher features and to adorn with greater beauty the nobler phases of its architecture. Our author has done no small part in this sympathetic labor. Using what seem to be most commonplace incidents and the uncouth but very expressive dialect of the negro, he creates among the old-time scenes tales of surprising dramatic quality. *Marse Chan,* for instance, holds the attention captive; yet, an analysis of the piece shows only rather quiet incidents and very few of them at that. *Meh Lady* and various others reveal the same artistic ability to create absorbing interest by combinations of seemingly insignificant events. The pathos of these stories is produced in the same unconventional manner; and the very unexpectedness of the catastrophes makes it all the more effective.

Page has confined himself, for the most part, to very short stories. The short story is not the best field for character-portrayal; yet the author has created a few figures of undoubted strength. But surpassing the action or the characters of these tales is the depth of sentiment, so unaffected, so pure, so unobtrusively obtained, and so effective. The stories composing *In Ole Virginia,* free, as they are from all taint of sentimentality, are well worth perusal as examples of emotional power gained through the simplest and often the most common-place agencies. It is doubtful whether Page has ever excelled that first volume of tales; perhaps he never will; for they approach a rarely attained degree of perfection.

VII

With this name we close the list of those to receive even a brief study. How many persons have been left unnoticed any well-informed reader of today may easily see. A bare mention of a few of them suggests a multitude of others—Albion Tourgée (1838-1905), author of *Figs and Thistles,* the famous *A Fool's Errand, by One of the Fools,* and several other volumes; Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-), famous through her *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and other exceedingly popular novels; John Alfred Macon (1851-), known through his *Uncle Gabe Tucker;* Harry Stillwell Edwards (1854-), whose *Two Runaways, and Other Stories* has received a wide reading; Grace King (1859-), author of *Balcony Stories;* Mary Johnston (1870-), author of *To Have and To Hold.* The list seems almost endless. A glance at the magazines of today would seem to show that at this moment America is depending for its literary entertainment far more upon the South than upon any other one section of the Union.

As we close this survey of Southern Literature we find much to arouse confidence in its future development. The section has largely recovered from the apathy bred by a pernicious system of human bondage; inestimable resources are coming to light; educational institutions of a high standard are now existing; wealth and energy are doing marvels. Rich as are the ore, timber, cotton, and sugar fields of these States their literary fields are of equal wealth. The history and traditions of four wars, not including the romances of the Spanish-American conflict and of innumerable Indian campaigns; the story of the subjugation of a vast wilderness; the strange customs of secluded peoples, Tennessee and Kentucky mountaineers, Georgia Crackers, and Louisiana Creoles; the wild and lonely life of early Texas and Southwestern settlers, the folk-lore of negro and Indian, the no less marvelous tales of modern commercial developments, strifes, victories, and failures, —these are but a few of the subjects as yet merely touched by the pens of Southern writers. Poetry, too, will in time return to its own; and where is sentiment, Nature, or general environment more sympathetic than in these States so beautiful in the gifts of forest and meadow, and yet, so filled with pathetic memories?

In the course of time publishing centers will arise, and these, while not absolutely necessary, will be great aids. Writers, remaining in the section that first inspired them, will not so soon lose the inspiration; and they will speak in plainer terms to a public that they know to be in sympathy with them. Many persons would deprecate the fact that our literature is thus divided into Eastern, Western, and Southern. But our country is too vast and too varied, to allow, just now, at least, a decided national uniformity. In this age of inventions, distance may be eradicated;

but home-life and natural environment do not change hastily. So many critics forget that a nation may have its many local flavors and yet possess its great central purposes and characteristics. Far rather is this to be sought for than a body of literature so unvaried in character as to preclude any possibility of its having come from one certain portion of the country. There is a charm in the individuality of sections as well as of human beings.

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